

RICE UNIVERSITY

Redefining the Boundaries:

Three Twentieth Century Canadian Works for Cello

by

Valdine Ritchie Mishkin

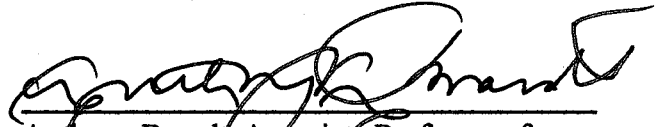
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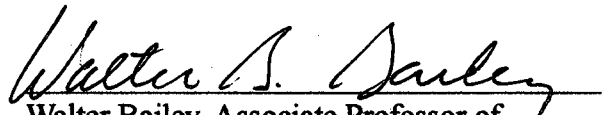
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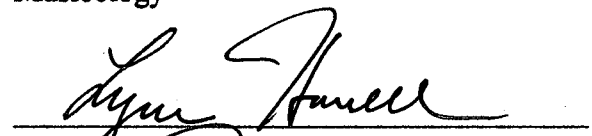
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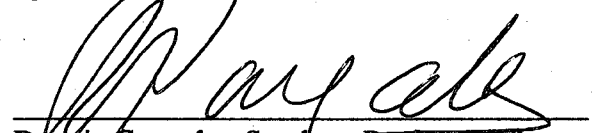
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ABSTRACT

Redefining the Boundaries: Three Twentieth Century Canadian Works for Cello

By

Valdine Ritchie Mishkin

Canadian music has come into its own and flourished in the twentieth century, but is largely unrecognized on an international level. This document examines three important cello works by Canadian composers that are deserving of international recognition: Jean Coulthard's *Sonata for Cello and Piano* (1947), Sophie-Carmen Eckhardt-Gramatté's *Duo Concertante* (1959), and André Prévost's *Sonate No. 2 pour Violoncelle et Piano* (1985). Foundational discussions include the culture of Canadian composition and the governmental programs that support it, the stylistic trends of Canadian composers, and the public resources for Canadian music. Six criteria for judging twentieth century music (craft of motivic content and structure, originality, strongly representing an established style, beauty, public acceptance, and accessibility to the cellist) are outlined in PART II and applied to the analysis of the three works in PART III. The value of the works is qualified through their exemplary display of several criteria. The goal of the document is to champion these exceptional but little-known works of three celebrated Canadian composers, and to encourage more exploration of twentieth century works through the application of the criteria.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

As a Canadian-born professional cellist, I find there is a noticeable lack of Canadian music in standard cello repertoire, and that international recognition of Canadian composers is almost non-existent. This situation fueled my passion to bring attention to worthy twentieth century compositions, and it employed my expertise as a cellist to evaluate my three favorite large-scale cello works by Canadian composers that I feel deserve a place amongst the repertoire. Whereas I have heard the names of numerous Canadian composers spoken by my teachers and had studied some of their works throughout my training in Winnipeg and Montreal, I did not realize that this exposure did not extend past Canada. During my time in the United States while pursuing advanced studies at Rice University in Houston, Texas, it became clear that my musical upbringing was distinctly “Canadian,” and that my experiences were shaped by the many organizations and social constructs of Canada.

Although the cultures of Canada and the United States are very similar in most respects, the subtle differences in the sociology of each culture are shaped by its governing bodies. In Canada, the Socialist government over the last century has been involved in the proliferation of the arts and music in Canada on a much more active level than the government of the United States. To give a general context of how this impacts the education of a musician, today’s typical “classically-trained” Canadian musician would be taught by a private instructor within the framework of a method (ex. Suzuki Method), conservatory system (ex. the Royal Conservatory of Music of Toronto or the Montreal Conservatoire), and/or their local university

preparatory division. They would have undergone several graded examinations, participated in countless performing organizations (such as Woman's Musical Clubs), and performed in numerous competitions (such as regional music competition festivals like the Winnipeg Competition Festival). Canadian compositions are required components of examinations and festivals, partially due to the Canadian Content requirement stipulated by government organizations that help fund these activities. The accomplished musician who continues on to a University degree in music is already an experienced performer, has studied a wide range of styles and genres (including a small selection of twentieth century Canadian works), and has a basic proficiency in rudiments theory, harmony, counterpoint, and piano. Thinking these types of standards and institutions were universal, I could not comprehend how unique it was to have new Canadian music proportionately represented in the curriculum, and soon came to realize that my knowledge of these composers and their works (however limited it was due to specific training as a pianist and cellist) did not extend past Canada's borders. This led me to wonder why Canadian works are absent from the standard repertoire.

It is only upon searching for Canadian works to include in my repertoire that unusual patterns began to emerge. First, Canadian composition is a relatively new concept, as it is widely established by Canadian scholars that original composition (outside of antiquated idioms) began only after WWII. For example, with this particular focus of Canadian cello works, all works (aside from small salon pieces) were composed in approximately the last half of the twentieth century. Second, the problem of exposure for Canadian works is doubled due to their relative newness and more modern stylistic idioms. Gaining exposure for *any* twentieth century work is limited, while very few twentieth century cello works are known to the public or performed regularly by cellists. Third, not many Canadian works have been published or

commercially recorded, therefore exposure outside of the Canadian databases is difficult to experience. Furthermore, due to the short history of scholarly study of Canadian music combined with its current situation of obscurity within Canada and abroad, it is difficult to track down a critical discussion of any Canadian work, let alone hear it live on a concert program. Part I of this thesis will provide background information to outline the social and governmental initiatives that support the proliferation and distribution of Canadian music, as well as an examination of the genres and musical styles of Canadian composers, and lastly, share how to make use of these constructs.

The case for the cello music being championed in this thesis must, as its foundation, be a discussion of the problems associated with the acceptance of twentieth century music, and what objective criteria can be used to argue a work's potential importance or longevity. Part II will discuss the six criteria for judgment specified to objectively argue a musical work's importance: craft of motivic development and structure; originality, strongly representing an established style, beauty, accessibility to the cellist, and public acceptance. To illustrate each criteria and how it can be applied to a twentieth century work, examples from current twentieth century standard cello repertoire are used. The criteria were chosen with the desire to apply these criteria freely to any musical work (or any other product of artistic endeavor, for that matter), setting forth a method for evaluating salient features of merit in a musical composition regardless of its style or genre. Yet as the styles of twentieth century music have undergone the most radical changes of any century (with some styles that test the very definition of music itself), and the amount of music to be examined has exponentially increased, the task of unveiling culturally significant works to the public or even within the musical community has taken on new proportions. This is why a set of criteria that can adequately address the wide array of musical

content of twentieth century works is a necessary tool for those individuals who wish to champion particular twentieth century compositions, since many works are in danger of obscurity and eventual omission because of *avant garde* style, lack of exposure, or being outside of the current musical taste.

Part III will involve a detailed discussion of the three works that, I believe, deserve a place in twentieth century standard cello repertoire: Jean Coulthard's *Sonata for Cello and Piano* (1947), Sophie-Carmen Eckhardt-Gramatté's *Duo Concertante* (1959), and André Prévost's *Sonate no.2 pour violoncelle et piano* (1985). There will be a brief biography about the training, work, and output of each composer, followed by a discussion of how their work for cello and piano is exceptional and deserving of exposure based on the six criteria outlined in Part II.

The objective of this thesis is: 1) to bring exposure to the culture of Canadian music and its prominent composers; 2) to illuminate the process of evaluating twentieth century works while taking into account the current problems of exposure and public acceptance; and 3) to determine why these three Canadian cello works are worthy of international exposure. A measure of success for this thesis would be to pique the interest of a colleague enough for them to seek out a recording or performance of one of the works championed. Gaining exposure to deserving works is an endeavor that the current generation must undertake to ensure a valid representation of all types of twentieth century music for future generations. Performers and concert organizers can also champion works by placing more twentieth century works on their concert programs. Music has the unique temporal characteristic of requiring someone or something to play it in order for it to exist (and the written page is simply the means to reproduce the composer's creation).

PART I

Overview of Canadian ‘Concert’ Music

Chapter 2

The Culture of “Concert” Music in Canada

The history of Canadian music is approximately a century old. However, its true awakening occurred in the aftermath of World War II. The Socialist government was the primary catalyst; it became an active advocate for the Canadian creative arts. How and why these governmental initiatives arose will offer a better understanding of Canadian musical culture and offer a richer context for the three works presented in this thesis.

Canada is a multicultural society, with the predominant influences being that of Britain and France. Due to such influence, the majority of Canadian composition prior to the 1940's was dominated by British church musicians, who were steeped in nineteenth century tradition. Until the Second World War, Canadian musicians and their audiences remain trapped within this nineteenth century aesthetic. Unsurprisingly, a Canadian audience's knowledge of major twentieth century composers consisted only of Debussy, Scriabin and early Schoenberg. Some governmental agencies were already in place before the 1940s to assist Canadian musicians and composers, such as the Canadian Performing Rights Society (hereinafter “CPRS”), formed in 1925 as a non-profit copyright collective to administer royalties to composers, lyric writers and publishers whose works were performed within Canada. (A subsidiary of CPRS was established in 1947 to continue the same service, named the Composers, Authors, and Publishers Association of Canada (hereinafter “CAPAC”). In 1936, Parliament provided further support to Canadian musicians through its creation of the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (hereinafter

“CBC”), which has become one of the world’s preeminent public broadcasting corporations. Outside of governmental assistance, BMI Canada Limited, a music publishing and recording corporation formed in 1940, was empathetic towards the plight of Canadian composers, and provided assistance with getting their works published and recorded. A multitude of composers had their works published or recorded (some for the first time) through BMI over the next decades. Still, little effort was devoted to furthering the cause of new music in Canada. It is not until the composers pressured the government themselves that any progress in the direction of innovation was supported. The initial step came in 1945 with the creation of the Canadian Music Council by Sir Ernest MacMillan and other concerned Canadian musicians to provide information, discuss issues, represent the musical community, and assist in the development of music in Canada.

Two significant changes in the late 1940’s revolutionized Canadian new music: first, WWII revived Canadian nationalism, and second, a younger generation of composers (namely Barbara Pentland, John Weinzwieg, and Jean Papineau-Couture) returned from studies abroad with a missionary zeal to expose and inform Canadian audiences to the idioms of the time. This created a schism between the older generation and younger generation of composers. The older generation, consisting primarily of transplanted British church musicians, was more concerned with having their music be tonally pleasing and traditional. However, the younger generation took a modern approach and was more in tune with the musical developments of Bartók, Hindemith, Schoenberg, and Stravinsky. Controversy erupted between the generations; Healy Willan, respected composer of church music and professor at University of Toronto, did not approve of the new directions of musical style, claiming “if you tear up anything by the roots, it

is bound to die!,"¹ while Barbara Pentland argued "while there's life, there's experiment. Without the element of looking forward, music would stagnate and die."² These young Canadian composers forged new paths and had the goal to educate and expose the public to new genres, banding together to instigate social change and set a higher value on Canadian arts and music. They felt Canadian composition was failing to adapt and modernize as compared with other countries, and was not presented frequently enough to win over the Canadian audience. As expressed by John Weinzwieg, "In all other aspects of human activity, including the visual and literary arts, we are very much concerned with the present. It is utterly illogical that in music we should dwell almost entirely in the past."³ Although change came slowly, the young composers remained persistent in their attempts to modernize Canadian music throughout their careers.

The climate became more favorable to the younger generation of composers during the early 1950s, with a number of events happening and the creation of new music organizations. Working together, younger composers gained significant ground toward their mission to modernize Canadian musical culture, and they were now in the position to educate the next generation. The older generation of composers (including Healy Willan and Leo Smith), who were occupying positions of influence within Canadian universities, retired. They were replaced with John Weinzwieg at the University of Toronto, Barbara Pentland at the University of British Columbia, Murray Adaskin at the University of Saskatchewan, István Anhalt at McGill University in Montreal, and Jean Papineau-Couture at l'Université de Montréal. The political activism of this younger generation of composers had great results; the Canadian League of Composers formed in 1951, the Canada Council formed in 1957, and the Canadian Music Centre

¹ John Beckwith, "Music", in *The Culture of Contemporary Canada*, ed. Julian Park, 149

² Barbara Pentland, "On Experiment in Music", *Canadian Review of Music and Art*, (February-March, 1943): 25.

³ John Weinzwieg, *Canadian Review of Music and Art*, (June 1942).

was established in 1959. The formation of the Canadian League of Composers marked a new era in Canadian culture.⁴ Compared to the Group of Seven, a group formed in 1920 of self-proclaimed modern Canadian artists, the composers “came together not for the purpose of achieving a uniform or national style but rather as brothers (and, before long, sisters) to proclaim a common cause. They wished to tell other Canadians and the world that they were determined to be listened to and taken seriously.”⁵ Formed by John Weinzwieg, and his former students Samuel Dolin and Harry Somers, the goal of the League was to provide a networking and marketing outlet for Canadian composers while stimulating public awareness of Canadian music. With no venues or audiences for their music, the League organized their own concert series of modern music, primarily presenting complete concerts of works from a featured League composer. By creating these opportunities (and many more as the League gained momentum), the League raised the status of the composer within Canadian culture, lobbying on behalf of composers’ legal and economic interests. The League presented over thirty concerts of Canadian music between 1951-60 (primarily in Toronto and Montreal), and by the end of their first decade League membership grew to forty members.

Additionally, in 1951, the historic *Massey* report presented by The Royal Commission on National Development in the Arts, Letters, and Sciences concluded that Canada was lagging in arts development, and therefore, government involvement was imperative. From this analysis, a series of governmental programs were initiated, such as the Canada Council for the Arts and the Canadian Broadcast Corporation Symphony. The CBC Symphony existed from 1952-1964 as an ensemble that would commission and perform large-scale new works from Canadian composers.

⁴ Helmut Kallmann, “First Fifteen Years of the Canadian League of Composers” in *The Canadian Composer*, (March 1966), 18

⁵ Ibid.

The Canada Council for the Arts was formed in 1957 to stimulate creative activity in the arts, especially with the new and experimental. The problem of limited access to scores combined with the fact that few scores were ever published or distributed, led to the need for a central depository for Canadian works. Conceived by the Canadian League of Composers and aided by the Canada Council for the Arts, the invaluable resource for Canadian music was realized with the founding of the Canadian Music Centre in 1959. This non-profit and non-governmental library and information centre acts as a central force for the dissemination and promotion of Canadian music, lending music at no cost, and faithfully collecting and cataloguing the works of Canadian composers. It is funded through a grant from the Canada Council and various other arts organizations.

The 1960s saw increased optimism for educating and engaging the public, and many projects came to fruition. The CMC began a series of catalogues of Canadian music, and produced the *Canadian Contemporary Music Study Courses* (taped and written analyses of Canadian works, although only three were completed). Publication and scholarship of Canadian music was limited before this time, but with the publication in 1960 of Helmut Kallmann's *A History of Music in Canada: 1534-1914*, Kallmann became a seminal authority on this subject matter and instigated further interest in Canadian musicology. In August 1960, the historic International Conference of Composers in Stratford, Ontario was put on by the Canadian League of Composers and the Stratford Shakespearean Festival Foundation of Canada; composers from all over the world took part in the conference's series of panel discussions, concerts, and social functions.⁶ Composers from over 20 countries representing various styles and genres of new

⁶ John Beckwith and Udo Kasemets, ed., *The Modern Composer and His World*, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1961).

music were involved in the conference, including Henk Badings (Holland), Karl-Birger Blomdahl (Sweden), Klaus Egge (Norway), Iain Hamilton (Scotland), Roy Harris (USA), Vagn Holmboe (Denmark), Ernst Krenek (USA), Otto Luening (USA), Elizabeth Maconchy (England), Zygmunt Mycielski (Poland), Hermann Reutter (Germany), Gunther Schuller (USA), Josef Tal (Israel), and Edgar Varèse (USA). Twenty-two of Canada's prominent composers participated in the conference, while only six presented their works (István Anhalt, Harry Freedman, Otto Joachim, Jean Papineau-Couture, Godfrey Ridout, and John Weinzweig) at one of the five concerts to ensure a balance between Canadians and non-Canadians.⁷ With all of the activity and organization amongst composers, the Canadian public was just beginning to become aware of the emerging *avant garde* concert scene. The 1961 *Semaine internationale de la musique actuelle* featured the first performances in Canada of works by *avant-garde* composers Edgar Varèse, John Cage, Earle Brown, Morton Feldman, Mauricio Kagel, and Bruno Maderna. Remarkably, only three Canadian works were presented: Serge Garant's *Anerca* (1961), Pierre Mercure's electronic ballet score *Incandescence* (1961), and István Anhalt's *Electronic Composition No. 3 'Birds and Bells'* (1960).⁸ Although this event brought new sounds to Canada and encouraged the exposure of some of Canada's own *avant garde* contributions, the music was not warmly received by the audience or the press. In an article in *La Presse* (August 8th, 1961), Claude Gingras commented on the problem of immediate public acceptance of *avant garde* twentieth century music: "In all this 'music' heard over five concerts there is surely some value and some deliberate mystification. It is too early to separate the two. It is too easy to laugh and it would be ridiculous to want to make a firm judgment. Only time will be the judge.

⁷ Clifford Ford, "International Conference of Composers" in *The Encyclopedia of Music in Canada*, 2003 ed.

⁸ George A. Proctor, *Canadian Music of the Twentieth Century*, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1980), 105.

Perhaps it will be necessary to find new definitions for the words 'art', 'music', 'dance', 'beauty', 'balance', and 'taste'".⁹ Meanwhile, some composers were starting to realize the importance of cultivating the next generation of concert-goers through educating and exposing children to new music. In 1962, the John Adaskin Project sought to engage young students through visiting public schools in Toronto and then writing suitable works for student ensembles.

Another boost for Canadian music and composition came in 1967 with the occasion of Canada's Centennial Year. For this celebration, the Canada Centennial Celebration Commission encouraged an unprecedented amount of new Canadian works through organizing Festival Canada (a 1967 series of concerts and shows), providing financial assistance to performing groups across Canada for productions and commissions, including a \$60,000 grant to the Canadian Music Centre for commissions of forty five new works and their performances. In total, approximately 140 new works were written for the federally-sponsored Centennial Commission, the CBC, and other bodies. In a list compiled by the Canadian Music Centre of works composed in honor of Canada's one-hundredth birthday, the contributions included: sixteen stage works (opera, ballet, puppet theatre); four radio operas; thirty-four orchestral works; four fanfares; twenty three chamber works (not including voice); twenty-six choral works; fourteen vocal works; seven keyboard works; and two film sound tracks. The effects of increased public awareness of new Canadian compositions during the Centennial year saw a significant increase in commissions in the subsequent decade; for example, of ninety orchestral works written from 1968-1978, commissions contributed to two-thirds of these works. In addition, the Canada Council (that acts as a financial intermediary between the performing group and the composers) was responsible for the most commissions during this time. Provincial arts

⁹ Lyse Richer, "Semaine internationale de musique actuelle" in *Encyclopedia of Music in Canada*, 2003 ed.

councils (particularly the Ontario Arts Council) and various orchestral societies and performing groups also provided funding. The former primary commissioner of new works, the CBC, unfortunately underwrote very few works due to governmental cut-backs in spending.

Education was (and still is) also an important priority of Canadians and their government. Universities and conservatories are supported by the provincial governments, enabling Canadians to receive a world-class formal education at a fraction of its actual cost. From the 1970s, Canada saw an increased interest in its citizens taking up musical composition. This was partly due to the increased number of full-time music students at Canadian universities. In 1958, there were approximately 200 music majors studying at Canadian universities; in 1977 this number increased to over 5000; and by 1991, student enrolment was estimated at over 6000. The areas of performance and music education attracted the largest number of students, but the numbers began to increase in the areas of composition and musicology as Canadian programs in these areas expanded and strengthened. Going hand-in-hand with more interest in musical education in Canada was the burst of bibliographic research on Canadian music that came in the 1970s. The interest in Canadian music scholarship culminated in the landmark publication of the *Encyclopedia of Music in Canada* (1981 in English, 1983 in French), led by the team of editors Helmut Kallmann, Gilles Potvin, and Kenneth Winters- it prompted so much extra research and interest in the study of Canadian music and musicians that the second edition appeared in 1992. The encyclopedia articles are now offered for free online, and are continually updated. Interest in the study of Canadian music before the 1950s prompted the founding of The Canadian Musical Heritage Society (CMHS) in 1982 with the purpose of locating, selecting, editing, and publishing Canadian works composed prior to 1950.

The public was beginning to acknowledge the cultural significance of creating new art of one's own country throughout the 1970s, while the government had to make tough decisions to cut back spending. By attending concerts and supporting the growth of new ensembles, the public was beginning to appreciate the availability of an array of twentieth century performances, thus making important progress towards the acceptance of "the new and experimental". This is evident by the number of new mixed-instrumentation performing groups formed in the 1970s that specialized in new music: L'Ensemble de la société de musique contemporaine du Québec (SMCQ, est. 1966), NOVATIONS in (Halifax, 1972); Array (Toronto, 1972); Vancouver New Music Society (1973); Days, Months, Years to Come (Vancouver, 1975); Music Inter Alia (Winnipeg, 1976); Espace musique (Ottawa, 1979). In particular, the excitement and progress that the SMCQ has generated since its inception has been remarkable. The objective of the ensemble as defined in its statutes 'to disseminate and promote contemporary music, both international and Canadian' showed success as early as on its tenth anniversary: "[the SMCQ] can not only rely on a considerable number of expert interpreters, but a new generation has also entered the field... Just as important as the development of the ensemble, a faithful audience has been created for this repertoire and it is growing."¹⁰ Overall, the group has premiered or presented over 900 twentieth century works (including numerous twentieth century 'classics' of the era that are all-too-often only heard in university classrooms), premiered over 100 commissioned works (the majority by Canadian composers), collaborated with leading Canadian and international performers (including guest composers with their leading interpreters, among them Messiaen and pianist Yvonne Loriod in 1970 and 1978, and Pierre Boulez and the Ensemble InterContemporain in 1991), the ensemble has toured numerous countries, has

¹⁰ Hélène Panneton, "Société de musique contemporaine du Québec" in *Encyclopedia of Music in Canada*, 2003 ed., quoting review by Eric McLean of 10th anniversary concert in the *Montreal Star*, December 10th, 1976.

received numerous awards, has been featured on 31 recordings and growing, and has staged several large festivals and events. One of its most celebrated events occurred in June 2000 when the SMCQ organized the Millennium Symphony that involved nineteen composers and was staged for an audience of 40,000 at Saint Joseph's Oratory in Montreal.

Electronic music was especially perpetuated in Canada with some significant technical contributions made by Canadians: in 1972 Ralph Dyck built the first synthesizer sequencing technology, bought five years later by Roland that became MIDI technology; in 1973 Barry Truax developed the first version of the POD system that provided a new approach to electronic composition based on quality of timbre rather than pitch; and in 1986 Barry Truax developed GRANX, a technology that conceives sound in particles instead of bands of waves.¹¹ On the side of electronic music performance, the Canadian Electronic Ensemble was formed in 1973, and composers responded by producing an impressive number of works (as well as some that incorporate acoustical instruments or other media).

The Operatic tradition experienced an outburst in the last two decades of the twentieth century, with fifty-seven new Canadian operas produced between 1980 and 2001 (including smaller-scale chamber operas). The Canadian public responded with the formation of ten opera companies from the early 1970s through the mid-1980s, resulting in an opera company in almost every major city in Canada (and the Canadian Opera Company becoming the sixth largest opera company in North America by the 1990s).

¹¹ Elaine Keillor, *Music in Canada: Capturing Landscape and Diversity*, (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2006), 264-5.

1986 saw one of the most ambitious international projects for increasing awareness of Canadian music and musicians- the “International Year of Canadian Music”- where concerts were organized throughout Canada and internationally. Furthermore, many organizations were having anniversaries in 1986 and participated in making this project a success, including CBC (50th), Canadian League of Composers (35th), Société de musique contemporaine du Québec (20th), New Music Concerts of Toronto (15th), COMUS Music Theatre of Toronto (10th), the Eckhardt-Gramatté Competition (10th), as well as Expo '86 being held in Vancouver. The next large national festival, *MusicCanadaMusique 2000*, was held to celebrate the new millennium with sixty new commissions and events across Canada¹².

Some of Canada's celebrated ensembles (besides the international tours of orchestras) have made a name for themselves internationally over the last few decades, including Toronto's *Tafelmusik* Baroque Orchestra and Chamber Choir, Montreal's *Violons du roy*, *Les Boréades de Montreal*, *Early Music Vancouver*, *La Nef*, (probably most famously) *Cirque du Soleil* and countless popular musicians. Summer music festivals have also attracted critics and audiences from around the world, including Festival of the Sound (in Parry Sound, Ontario), Ottawa International Chamber Music Festival, and the Winnipeg New Music Festival (also the host of an important competition of Canadian symphonic works).

Today, new music festivals in Canada are “all the rage,” perhaps getting closer to the popularity that new music once held before the twentieth century custom of “old music is the only good music” became the norm. There are symphony orchestras in every major city (although only a handful are considered full-time employment), and many of them regularly

¹² Keillor, 251.

commission and perform Canadian works. Government grants still provide support for research, education, various projects and compositions, making Canada an ideal place for innovation. Many internationally recognized performers have been trained in Canada at its preparatory divisions, universities and conservatories, including Zara Nelsova, Shauna Rolston, Desmond Hoebig, Amanda Forsyth, Glenn Gould, Oscar Peterson, Jon Kimura Parker, Gwen Hoebig, Lara St. John, and Scott St. John to name only a few.

Over several decades, the Canadian government has almost single-handedly invigorated Canadian music-making. However, in terms of world-wide recognition of Canadian music, the government's efforts have fallen short. Because the government's funding primarily subsidizes activities within the country, it has not resulted in better international exposure. It is up to individual musicians and ensembles, traveling beyond the country's borders, to bring some deserving works to the attention of the international community.

Chapter 3

Stylistic Trends of Canadian Composers

There is no 'national' school of Canadian composition. Instead, reflecting the diversity of the last sixty years, Canadian creative culture is extremely heterogeneous. As discussed in the previous chapter, during the 1940s, Canada experienced a cultural awakening concerning the style of music being produced. As with many aspects of Canadian popular culture, its conservative British underpinning slowed the proliferation of new and experimental idioms in music, but predominant international styles are prevalent among Canadian composers: late-Romanticism, Neo-classicism, Serialism, *Avant garde* techniques, Electronic music, Post-Modernism, as well as Nationalism. Becoming aware of the principle Canadian composers of diverse stylistic trends will provide a better comprehension of the variety of experience possible in Canadian concert music, and lend support to the argument for its quality and relevance on an international level.

1941-1951 has been described as a new era in Canadian music.¹³ During this time, it was evident that there was a divide between the older and younger generation of composers. Even internationally, there was a dichotomy in musical directions between those who supported new compositional techniques such as serial techniques and those who dismissed the approach.¹⁴ Those composers who utilized serial or aleatoric practices were seen as *avant-garde*, while those who developed idioms derived from late romanticism were deemed conservative. Barbara

¹³ Proctor, *Canadian Music of the Twentieth Century*, 32.

¹⁴ Keillor, *Music in Canada: Capturing Landscape and Diversity*, 219.

Pentland went so far to declare this time as the beginning of Canadian music, voicing her bitterness towards the prior generation of composers in a 1950 article for the *Northern Review*:

The long dependence on "mother" country has allowed our resources of native talent to be stifled or exported... before our time music development was largely in the hands of imported English organists, who, however sound academically, had no creative contribution to make of any general value... larger works of serious intent are apt to remain piled on the Great Canadian Shelf.¹⁵

Despite the clear dismissal of older traditions by the younger generation of composers, conservative idioms, particularly late-romanticism was continued by a many celebrated composers. Principle representatives of the late romantic style in Canada include Healy Willan, Oskar Morawetz, Godfrey Ridout, Samuel Dolin, Jean Coulthard, and Talivaldis Kenins. While styles began to diverge further in the 1950s with the preference of neo-classicism among the younger generation of Canadians composers and the 1960s ushered in a general preference for more *avant garde* idioms, the above composers especially perpetuated the nineteenth century tradition in the genres of piano, organ, choral and orchestral music. Commissions also perpetuated older traditions over the decades. Many of this older generation never ventured into more modern idioms, while others (like Samuel Dolin and Oskar Morawetz) explored more contemporary styles as they matured.

Canadian composers' proclivity for neo-classicism in the 1940s dictated the predominant choice of traditional instrumental combinations as well as musical style (influenced by Stravinsky and Hindemith). Piano music, which had previously been mostly character and salon

¹⁵ Barbara Pentland, "Canadian Music, 1950," *Northern Review*, (February-March 1950), 43-6.

pieces, consisted more of larger-scale works such as sonatas, suites, fantasias, and variations. Chamber music for solo stringed instrument with piano was a popular genre, with the violin and piano combination receiving the most works, followed by the string quartet. This preference also had a practical purpose; chamber works presented fewer logistical and financial obstacles for gaining public performances. The majority follow neo-baroque or neo-classical formal procedures, with polytonality being the preferred device.¹⁶ Although the structures were borrowed from previous centuries, tonal unity was replaced by the twentieth century aesthetic of unity through consistent use of melodic, rhythmic, and harmonic patterns. Composers who wrote in this style (but all in their own unique way) included Violet Archer, Alexander Brott, Gilles Tremblant, John Beckwith, and Jean Papineau-Couture. In the 1950s, neoclassicism was at its height in Canadian composition. Orchestral music, both programmatic and abstract works, was largely influenced by neoclassicism. (An interesting characteristic of these works is that they remained under twenty minutes long to help the composers' chances of receiving a first performance (and hopefully a second and third) by Canadian orchestras who were filling their quota of Canadian programming.¹⁷) Chamber music remained a popular medium with the majority of works being written for traditional groupings. Chamber music for piano and a single instrument remained more neoclassic in design and often romantic in mood (as in the sonatas of Harry Somers, Violet Archer, Oskar Morawetz, and Robert Turner). As the predominant neo-classic style began to move away to more experimental genres in the 1960s, neo-classicism was perpetuated mostly through commissions and more traditional genres such as chamber music. Chamber music written in the early to mid-1960s still included conventional genres such as the string quartet (John Weinzwieg, S.C. Eckhardt-Gramatté, Clermont Pépin), piano trio (Barbara

¹⁶ Proctor, 35.

¹⁷ Ibid., 73.

Pentland), woodwind quintet (Harry Freedman, Jean Papineau-Couture, John Weinzweig), solo string with piano sonata (André Prévost, Jean Papineau-Couture), as well as solo piano (Barbara Pentland, Bruce Mather, Jack Behrens, Violet Archer, George Fiala). Orchestral works, while still showing a divide between neoclassical (Murray Adaskin, Milton Barnes, Alexander Brott, Jacques Hétu, Talivaldis Kenins, etc.) and more *avant garde* idioms, seemed to be moving back toward the more conservatively romantic mood of the period.¹⁸

Juxtaposing the neo-classicism of the 1940s was more *avant garde* idioms such as serialism, championed by John Weinzweig (who wrote the first Canadian twelve-tone work), Harry Somers, and Barbara Pentland. The influence of *avant garde* styles (such as Schoenberg's Expressionism and the post-Webern school) soon spread to more composers in the 1950s. Although orchestral music was dominated by neo-classicism at this time, serialism was the preferred style for the orchestral compositions of new immigrants István Anhalt, Otto Joachim, and Udo Kasemets,¹⁹ as well as Canadians Harry Freedman, John Weinzweig, and Barbara Pentland. Serialism was also a common stylistic trend in chamber music of 1950s, showing the influence of Stravinsky as in the string quartets of Clermont Pépin, Otto Joachim (also his sonata for cello and piano), Harry Somers, and Barbara Pentland (also her *Duo* for viola and piano). By the 1960s, twelve-tone serialism was no longer an *avant garde* idiom, although Barbara Pentland, Jacques Hétu, and Walter Buczynski contributed serial works during this time.

After 1960, as Canadian composers explored more *avant garde* idioms and neo-classicism waned, a 'New Romanticism' emerged on the scene.²⁰ Orchestral music adopted

¹⁸ Proctor, 187.

¹⁹ Ibid., 68.

²⁰ Ibid., 103.

avant garde techniques, with composers (such as Udo Kasemets, Otto Joachim, R. Murray Schafer, John Beckwith, István Anhalt, Harry Somers, Serge Garant, Gilles Tremblay, and Clermont Pépin) employing such techniques as aleatoric, chance, indeterminacy, graphic scores, prepared electronic tape, and unconventional placements of musicians within the concert hall in their works.²¹ In chamber music, works written for unusual combinations of instruments became more prevalent (Norma Beecroft, R. Murray Schafer, Harry Somers, Serge Garant, Gilles Tremblay, etc): the younger composers in particular avoided composing in the traditional genres. These younger Canadian composers were interested in newer forms of music, influenced by the example of European and American composers such as Boulez, Stockhausen, Berio, Cage, and Varèse. With the flurry of attention given to Canadian composers during the 1967 Centennial Celebrations (for which over 140 works were commissions), the subsequent years saw even more interest in *avant garde* idioms. Mixed-media compositions demonstrated the composers' search for freedom of form and experimentation with new sounds (Otto Joachim, Udo Kasemets), and the trend to use unorthodox special stage arrangements (John Beckwith, John Weinzwieg, Barbara Pentland) gained popularity. Even the most conservative genres of piano and orchestral music saw some experimental works (John Weinzwieg, Derek Healey, Jean Papineau-Couture, R. Murray Schafer, Harry Freedman, and Serge Garant). While chamber music became the favorite medium of Canadian composers after 1967, there were over twice as many works of an experimental nature than traditional. Remarkable about this decade's affinity for experimental genres is the inclusion of experimental choral music (Harry Somers, R. Murray Schafer, André Prévost, Derek Healey), and even *avant garde* organ music (Derek Healey, Denis Lorrain, and Bruce Mather).

²¹ Proctor, 108.

Canada became a leading innovator of electronic music beginning in 1952 with Ottawa resident Hugh LeCaine's development of electronic music hardware and consequent compositions.²² Electronic music was gaining popularity during the 1950s with these inventions, and finally assumed a significant role in Canadian music in the 1960s, supported by electronic studios that opened at the University of Toronto (1959) followed by McGill University and the University of British Columbia.²³ Composers who wrote electronic works (some combining traditional instruments) include István Anhalt, Norma Beecroft, and Udo Kasemets. In the late 1960s and through the 1970s, electronic music expanded further to a more spontaneous genesis with the use of computers and synthesizers (Hugh LeCaine, Gustav Chiamaga, Otto Joachim, Saint-Marcoux), as well as the continuation of electronic music in combination with conventional instruments (including Otto Joachim, John Beckwith, István Anhalt, Barry Truax).

During the last few decades of the twentieth century, there was again a divergence in musical language- acoustic music, electronic music, and the combination of the two. A reactionary return to more traditional aesthetics resulted in the styles of postmodernism, neo-romanticism, and minimalism. The postmodern movement of the 1970s (that came as a reaction to atonal modernism) was also felt in Canada. Canadian composers of this period were focused on blending older traditions with newer, tonality with atonality, Western music with non-Western music, 'classical' idioms with 'popular' idioms, and scholarly music with folk music (in particular, the culture of the Native peoples of Canada gained presence in the 1990s.)²⁴ Many

²² Ibid.

²³ Keillor, *Music in Canada: Capturing Landscape and Diversity*, 224.

²⁴ Ibid., 255.

were influenced by the American composers' minimalist style incorporating ostinati or non-Western practices.

Even though Nationalism is not a predominant trend in Canada, infusing a nationalistic flavor to works has spanned over fifty years and encompassed every stylistic trend, as seen in the works of Claude Champagne, John Weinzwieg, Harry Somers, R. Murray Schafer, Srul Irving Glick, John Beckwith, Harry Freedman, Talivaldis Kenins, Murray Adaskin, Kelsey Jones, and Derek Healey.

Exposing the youngest generation of Canadians to new music began in the 1950s with a surge in music educational compositions- works were written for many purposes such as works for orchestra, string ensemble, choir, chamber group, and piano. Soon the foremost composers of Canada were writing school-level educational music for the John Adaskin Project, as well educational piano literature by composers such as Brian Cherney, Barbara Pentland, Talivaldis Kenins, Jean Coulthard, Harry Somers, and Otto Joachim.

On a broader level, the general public has been given increased opportunity over the last fifty years to experience Canadian music with the institutions of the CBC radio and the Canadian Music Centre. It is now time to bring Canadian music onto the international music scene by creating awareness of the great Canadian works and making the music of Canada more accessible. The next chapter outlines the specific resources to facilitate more exposure to Canadian music.

Chapter 4

How to Seek Out Canadian Music

The availability of Canadian music to the public has been the principle focus of composers and governmental programs since the 1950s. With several resources made readily accessible to all through technology, an increase in musicological research, and the widening reach of Canadian performers to international audiences, there has never been a better time to discover the works of Canadian composers.

The best place to start would be the Canadian Music Centre (www.musiccentre.ca), either online or in person at one of their libraries in Vancouver, Calgary, Toronto, Montreal, Sackville (New Brunswick), and even Amsterdam (at the Muziekgebouw in The Netherlands). The search engine for works is well-designed, and the information listed under each work is invaluable, such as the length of the work, its difficulty level, the size and type of the score, any program notes, listing of movement names, premiere and/or recording information, and the composer's biography. Scores are loaned at no cost within Canada (with free shipping to and from your home) and loaned in the United States for a shipping fee. Any of the scores can be purchased through CMC unless they are otherwise published; most scores are sold as professionally hand-written or computer generated through CMC's score-binding service. CMC also has a distribution service that sells CDs of independently produced Canadian artists (over 1200 independent titles available), as well as maintains an extensive collection of archive recordings in their libraries. The newly launched *CentreStreams* feature offers the added service of listening to sound files of complete recordings, available through free registration on their website- and invaluable resource for those who cannot go to a CMC library in person, but would

like to browse Canadian music. The website is a one-stop-shop for discovering and selecting Canadian works, although the breadth and volume of the information available is massive. Other services they offer include repertoire consultation free of charge from the National Librarian, distribution of information (such as information about its composers, reviews, program notes, interviews, local flyers, and competition applications), and music printing and binding.

The *Encyclopedia of Music in Canada* is also an invaluable resource for researching any facet of Canadian musical history. This comprehensive encyclopedia is offered in print and also online at no cost- www.canadianencyclopedia.ca- this website is shared with *The Canadian Encyclopedia*, *Youth Encyclopedia*, and *Maclean's Magazine* articles.

But with so much information available, having a general knowledge of who the most celebrated or significant Canadian composers are makes the search for significant works more accessible. Using the criteria outlined in the next section, an objective measure of a composer's popularity or cultural significance might be if his or her work is frequently recorded, performed, or featured in some way to the Canadian public. Several recording and radio series have been produced primarily by the CBC and the CMC to highlight the works of celebrated Canadian composers. The documentary-style compact disc series by Centrediscs (CMC label), *Canadian Composers Portraits*, has produced discs on István Anhalt, Murray Adaskin, Violet Archer, John Beckwith, Norma Beecroft, Brian Cherney, Jean Coulthard, Malcolm Forsyth, Srul Irving Glick, Jacques Hétu, Talivaldis Kenins, Oskar Morawetz, Jean Papineau-Couture, Barbara Pentland, R. Murray Schafer, Ann Southam, Harry Somers, Gilles Tremblay, and John Weinzwieg. The CBC produced a series of CDs, *Ovations*, released in four volumes (containing one disc of selected works for each composer), that features Harry Freedman, Jean Coulthard, Jacques Hétu, John

Weinzweig, Murray Adaskin, Ann Southam, Brian Cherney, István Anhalt, Robert Turner, Violet Archer, Malcolm Forsyth, Oskar Morawetz, Jean Papineau-Couture, R. Murray Schafer, Talivaldis Kenins, John Beckwith, Norma Beecroft, Barbara Pentland, and Gilles Tremblay. Radio Canada International (RCI) produced the extensive recording series of 39 volumes, *Anthology of Canadian Music*, featuring multi-disc collections of the works of John Weinzweig, Serge Garant, R. Murry Schafer, Jean Papineau-Couture, Clermont Pépin, François Morel, Harry Somers, Harry Freedman, Bruce Mather, Jean Coulthard, Healy Willan, Gilles Tremblay, Norma Beecroft, Otto Joachim, Robert Turner, Oskar Morawetz, Violet Archer, Micheline Coulomb Saint-Marcoux, Jean Vallerand, Alexander Brott, S.C. Eckhardt-Gramatté, István Anhalt, Murray Adaskin, Kelsey Jones, Barbara Pentland, John Beckwith, George Fiala, André Prévost, Roger Matton, Claude Champagne, Jacques Hétu, Rodolphe Mathieu, Talivaldis Kenins, Srul Irving Glick, Pierre Mercure, Claude Vivier, as well as discs on electroacoustics, jazz, and folklore. While not featured in the previous collections, these composers have released extensive recordings (either independently produced feature recordings or part of several collections) and deserve mention: Maya Badian, Michael Conway Baker, Walter Buczynski, Ruth Watson Henderson, Gary Kulesha, Claude Vivier.

Turning to a more specific search for Canadian cello music, the amount of works written for cello is remarkable. Taking into account the short history of authentic Canadian music, the cello claims the status as being one of the preferred solo or chamber instruments of Canadian composers, (although the violin still claims the largest number of scores at a total of 394). There are a total of 270 works for solo cello and cello with piano in the Canadian Music Centre

Library; of those works, 98 are written for solo cello and 40 works are entitled “Sonata” or its French equivalent “Sonate”.

Canada has also produced a number of virtuoso cellists and attracted master cello teachers from around the world, and many have commissioned, collaborated, and performed numerous Canadian works. Some important cellists include Walter Joachim, Zara Nelsova, Ian Hampton, Ernst Friedlander, Leo Smith, Peggie Sampson, Lorne Munroe, Malcolm Tait, Denis Brott, Yuli Turovsky, Vladimir Orloff, Amanda Forsyth, Ofra Harnoy, Shauna Rolston, Eric Wilson, Desmond Hoebig, Elizabeth Dolin, Michael Kilburn, and Hélène Gagné. Searching for their recordings or premiere performances is also a good way to discover important Canadian cello works.

With the easy access of many resources on Canadian music and composers, Canadian works are well-positioned to emerge beyond the borders of Canada. The challenge is creating a ‘buzz’ amongst this generation of musicians and concert-goers that will permeate the international community. The plight of Canadian music is not isolated. Forming a mainstream audience for twentieth century works is of utmost importance to the survival and longevity of the works of many important composers, composers who are in danger of never achieving the celebrated status of the eighteenth and nineteenth century greats. In the next part of this thesis, the method for deciphering which twentieth century works have the potential for greatness is addressed through applying six analytical criteria.

PART II:

Criteria for Analysis

Chapter 5

Criteria: Craft of Motivic Content and Structure

The craft of a work involves the skill of the composer in articulating his or her musical ideas in a composition. There are four principle elements that contribute to the craft of a work: formal organization and pacing (i.e. proportions); harmony and voice leading; motivic development; and idiomatic writing for the instrument(s). The great works of the common practice period (spanning the Baroque, Classical, and Romantic eras) demonstrated the integration these qualities with great consistency, but as the twentieth century approached, the various elements of musical composition were re-examined and reconstituted to express original and modern ideas. Composers had the freedom to either incorporate or move away from the established forms of the common practice era (such as Sonata-Allegro, Rondo, Theme and Variation, Minuet-Trio forms, etc.). The underlying characteristics of common practice music, namely the harmonic structure of I-IV-V-I and contrapuntal norms (such as avoiding parallel fifths and octaves) were gradually thrown out and replaced with an expanding harmonic language that included everything from extended tonality (use of added notes, unprepared moving from key to key, parallel motion, etc.), modality (used commonly in Impressionism or works inspired by folk music), polytonality (using two or more keys simultaneously), atonality (all twelve pitches considered equal), and serialism (using sequences of tone rows). The manipulation of motivic content became a driving force in composition as the boundaries and structures of tonality were redrawn, therefore in many twentieth century styles the motivic content or development is a more important feature than its harmonic structure. Idiomatic

writing for the instrument will be addressed more specifically to the cello in a later criteria chapter dealing with accessibility to the cellist.

Twentieth century composers have released themselves from the strict formulaic formal structures of the common practice period, but the idea of proportion and balance are still fundamental aspects of a twentieth century composition. As the desire to be original and innovative became the principle concern of twentieth century composers, and every aspect of musical composition was examined as an individual property, there emerged a freedom to either apply or ignore the established formal structures. Many composers chose to use traditional formal structures as a unifying agent while exploring new directions in other aspects of composition such as harmonic language and motivic development; the most apparent manifestation of this idea is found in Neoclassicism that celebrated the return of classical forms. Other composers prioritized the importance of motivic content in the shaping the work. Nevertheless, the basic function of form cannot be eradicated since an organizational process is implicit in all composition (with the exception of Indeterminate music or Aleatoric music where the ideal is randomness). The common processes of form can be described as either sectional (as in Rondo and Strophic form), developmental (as in Sonata form) or variational (as in theme and variation, chaconne, passacaglia). New processes of form have emerged in the twentieth century, described through connection (by the use of gradation or dissolution) or contrast (by the use of juxtaposition or interpolation). What remains pertinent is discovering how the sections are balanced, how the sections relate to each other, and what the developmental outcome of the work is.

In the common practice era, harmonic structure played a decisive role in musical organization. One theoretical method that highlights the importance of harmony is Schenkerian analysis, where the entire composition can be hierarchically reduced to discover the fundamental structure (or *Ursatz*), consisting of the melodic prototype (or *Urlinie*) of pitch degrees 3-2-1 over a harmonic prototype (or *Bassbrechung*) that moves from I to V and back to I. The remarkable outcome of the analysis demonstrates the commonality of this simple underlying harmonic structure that spanned hundreds of years and countless original compositions. Therefore, the analysis demonstrates a composer's mastery in how creatively, boldly, whimsically, detailed, or ornamentally he could disguise the pervasive underpinning of common practice tonality. From our twentieth century perspective, this demonstrates the unconscious or implicit nature of tonal harmonic structure.

In essence, tonality's relationship of consonance to dissonance was being re-evaluated in the works of modern composers of the late nineteenth century through the early twentieth century, such as Wagner, Stravinsky, and Schoenberg. These composers challenged this centuries-old formula of tonal structure by expanding the limits of tonality to the point of collapse (atonality). The fundamental tonic-dominant trajectory of the harmonic structure was no longer the driving force of many twentieth century idioms, therefore other elements of composition needed to be further exploited to create unity in a work. This ultimately caused a shift in the role of motivic development where it eventually became a principle unifying device. In twentieth century styles that remain tonally-based (however loosely) such as Post-Romantic, French Modernist, and Neo-Classic, the harmonic language was less dependent on strict harmonic structure and more concerned with tone color and new harmonies (including modality, polytonality, parallel motion, etc.), therefore Schenkerian analysis has a lot of difficulty tackling

these works. Many composers chose to continue expanding harmonic language instead of throwing it out altogether, but would depend on motivic development as an important tool for arriving at harmonic goals, grading the buildup of tension and release, delineating sections, or unifying an entire work. As in common practice works, discovering the overall structure of twentieth century works that are Post-Romantic, French Modernist, or Neo-Classic in style is still found most easily by tracing the motives and the textural delineations of each motive (instead of harmonic goals). It is in the composer's individual treatment of the motivic development where the craft of the work lies, regardless of the style or genre.

The concept of motivic unity became even more important in atonal and in certain twelve-tone works, where the motivic units (or cells as they are commonly termed) became the primary focus of a composition, particularly when the reference of tonality was eliminated altogether or when the permutations of a tone row were being exploited. The structure of a work was therefore much more dependent on the recurrence of motives or cells than on an underlying harmonic structure, and the twentieth century composer must have exceptional craft to bring cohesion and developmental interest to the work when harmony offered no clear point of reference. Properties of a motive, such as intervallic content, rhythm, texture, and timber, become more salient when deciphering the structure of a work; therefore the return of the original scoring helps to delineate the structure by defining the motivic developmental journey. As described in the introduction of Bryan R. Simm's *Music of the Twentieth Century: Style and Structure*, "A musical structure embodies a principle of expansion- that is, an underlying rationale for how and why the parts of a composition belong together,"¹ therefore examining the

¹ Bryan R. Simms, *Music of the Twentieth Century: Style and Structure*, 2nd edition, (New York: Schirmer Books, 1996), xvi.

craft of the motivic content and how it has distinguished the sections of overall structure helps us to better understand a twentieth century work. Arnold Schoenberg, a major proponent of atonality in the early twentieth century, explained that, through the *emancipation of dissonance* (where comprehensibility of dissonance was considered equal to the comprehensibility of consonance), motivic content becomes more important in creating the structural unity of a piece. In contrast to Schenker's harmonic view, Schoenberg's view of the importance of motive in tonal music is very revealing:

The motive generally appears in a characteristic and impressive manner at the beginning of a piece. The features of a motive are intervals and rhythms, combined to produce a memorable shape or contour which usually implies an inherent harmony. Inasmuch as almost every figure within a piece reveals some relationship to it, the basic motive is often considered the 'germ' of the idea. Since it includes elements, at least, of every subsequent musical figure, one could consider it the 'smallest common multiple'. And since it is included in every subsequent figure, it could be considered the 'greatest common factor'.

However, everything depends on its use. Whether a motive be simple or complex, whether it consists of few or many features, the final impression of the piece is not determined in its primary form. Everything depends on its treatment and development.

A motive appears constantly throughout a piece: *it is repeated*. [But] repetition alone often gives rise to *monotony*. Monotony can only be overcome by *variation*.²

A work may therefore be evaluated on the criteria of motivic development (or variation in Schoenberg's words) as a fundamental aspect of the work's quality of craft.

There are, however, certain genres and styles of the twentieth century where craft does not apply, or the craft of a work becomes its product and not its basis. With every aspect of musical composition being scrutinized or taken apart over the twentieth century, even the two most basic structural components of a work that were once the template for all musical works- its harmony and melody- could be manipulated and even discarded altogether. In Minimalism, (as

² *Ibid.*, 22.

in the works of Steve Reich, Philip Glass, John Adams), the motivic content is obscured through constant trance-like rhythmic ostinati to create stasis or slow-moving variation, essentially eliminating the need for well-defined motives. In Indeterminacy and Aleatoric Music that relies on chance or randomness (as in certain works of John Cage, Morton Feldman, and Karl-Heinz Stockhausen), the composer has relinquished elements that control the exact craft of the composition and thus the product is different every performance based on the chance interaction of the parts, much like a science experiment with many variables.

In twentieth century cello literature, because the cello is primarily a linear instrument, there is an even more pronounced emphasis on motivic development. Hindemith's *Sonate für Violoncello solo, Op. 25 No. 3* is a perfect example of motivic development in an atonal work. The opening motive of cascading triplet figures punctuated by double stops in dotted eight-sixteenths presents the occurring rhythmic motives that pervade the movement as well as the subsequent three movements. (see *figure 5.1*). The melodic contour of the wave-like falling and rising triplets in the opening motive is a contour that is exploited in various speeds and moods throughout the work, most poetically in the *Langsam* third movement (see *figure 5.2*), and then energetically in *spiccato* triplets in the fourth movement (see *figure 5.3*). The intervallic content of the opening motive contains frequent alternation between leaps of a tritone and a perfect fifth (outlining a major seventh) as well as small chromatic cell. The frequent use of double stops in the opening motive is the basis of the aggressive fifth movement. (see *figure 5.4*)

Figure 5.1:



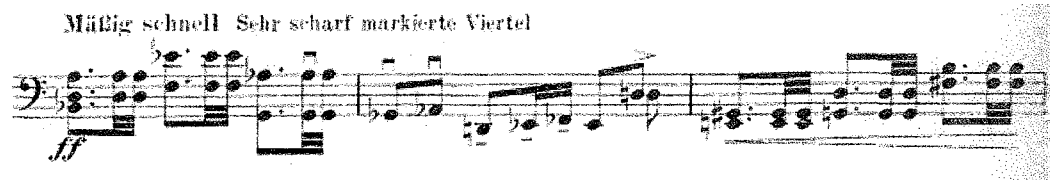
Figure 5.2:



Figure 5.3:



Figure 5.4:



Although examining the criteria of craft gives us one of the most objective ways to analyze a work, the work must also demonstrate positive aspects of other criteria such as originality and/or beauty in order to determine if the work has any artistic merit. The reason for this is the pejorative connotations of the solitary complement “the work is well-crafted,” as this would refer to the work as unimaginative, uninspired, or derivative. However, a successful

work cannot exist without exhibiting qualities of excellent craft, since a work that is poorly crafted (however successful other aspects of the work are) has problems in overall proportion, balance and weight of the sections, trajectory of musical ideas, or sense of redundancy.

Therefore, the work would always leave the feeling that something is missing or inadequately supported. In twentieth century works, the task of determining the merit of a work is complicated further with aspects of harmony and voice leading being less important or non-existent while aspects of motivic development and the variant application of formal procedures become more salient features. Therefore, the intention of examining the criteria of craft is to discover how the composer communicates his or her ideas with imagination and original artistic intention.

Chapter 6

Criteria: Original Voice

Every composer whose music is still performed today has earned their fame through the original voice of their compositions. Through composers' innovations, came the stylistic eras that we now study as music history. Although there are characteristics that connect composers within a stylistic trend (and when considered together comprise an era), each composer contributed to the development of music in their own unique way. Some composers received great public acceptance during their lifetime (such as Haydn and Mozart), and others were only given their due acknowledgment posthumously because their music was perhaps too advanced for the current taste of their audience (such as Schubert). The later issue applies most aptly to the plight of twentieth century composers, as never before has there been an era where so many composers of *avant garde* styles have been so poorly accepted by the general public. As the eras and stylistic trends of the twentieth century have changed so rapidly and radically, part of the issue relies on the notion of 'time will only tell' for determining the most significant original voices from the derivative ones. Furthermore, public acceptance of current 'art music' has a different social culture than that of centuries ago, as now, only in certain pockets of our modern society is the newest art form embraced (while the general public is more interested in popular music and easy listening). The modern composer, therefore, has a difficult existence in today's society of constantly asserting his or her own voice without the widespread support and accolades of public acceptance.

Are there objective elements in a musical work that separate it from its contemporary works as original? Certainly, the first composition in a new style would qualify as original, but

when judging a composer on original style, the qualities must be better defined in order to distinguish the significant works from derivative works. Some composers have invented new idioms based on theories of acoustics or tone-relations (such as Schoenberg, Hindemith, and Scriabin,)³ some infused old idioms into new idioms (such as modes, folk music, plainsong, etc.), while others have manipulated or expanded established aspects of music (in terms of harmony, melody, timbre, rhythm, etc.). But what must emerge out of the work is an artistic statement that cannot be found in any other source; in other words, a unique personality or a fresh “primal” idea. “Originality is in fact, ‘saying what you mean’. If someone else has said it, or is in the process of saying it, the effect will not be quite the same if what you have to say comes from some deep idea worthy of expressing.”⁴ Since numerous composers possess a unique voice which has earned them a place already in twentieth century music history, we will take special notice of a work that breaks away significantly from all other works of its genre, was considered *avant garde* for its composition date, possesses salient features of harmony or melody or rhythm that have a one-of-a-kind affect, or has stood out in retrospect as the beginning of or a step towards a new stylistic idiom. Many such works stand out in the history text books, such as Stravinsky’s *Rite of Spring* (whose first performance sparked a riot because of its startling primitive yet complexly rhythmic music and choreography), Schoenberg’s *Pierrot Lunaire* (the first use of *Sprechstimme*), or John Cage’s *Bacchanale* (first use of ‘prepared’ piano⁵) to name only a few.

Several twentieth century works have risen to the status of historically important works solely on the basis of their originality of applying a new compositional technique or style. This

³ H.V. Spanner, “What is Originality?,” *The Musical Times*, (July 1952): 311.

⁴ Ibid

⁵ Simms, *Music of the Twentieth Century: Style and Structure*, 309.

urge to create something innovative as opposed to simply expanding a previous concept of harmony, melody, or rhythm is a principle preoccupation of twentieth century composers. Therefore, the criteria of originality in experimental or *avant garde* idioms becomes the most important (and sometimes only) criteria for judgment. The variety of experimentation in twentieth century genres has produced some of the wildest and inventive styles of compositions (such as computer-generated music, aleatoric music, cacophony, use of non-instruments, etc.) that have required an expansion or even redefinition of the term 'music' itself- when does music become noise? Therefore, will these works that are admired almost solely for their originality of technique or style stand the test of time as "music" or will they simply serve as a reference in music history for how far the boundaries can be pushed? When evaluating an experimental work, we must look to find other criteria such as craft of motivic development and structure or even beauty to strengthen the argument of a work's potential validity and longevity. The task is made more difficult by the myriad of composers who can be considered to represent a style at its apex by themselves or with only one or two other composers.

The current standard cello repertoire is unusually conservative in relation to the wide array of twentieth century styles and genres, but hopefully this situation will improve over time as more cellists and audiences become interested in music outside of traditional guidelines. Of the most frequently played cello works, the Sonatas of Debussy and Carter are good examples of originality, although there is a large amount of seldom-explored works that display originality yet to be discovered by both cellist and audiences.

Debussy's (1862-1918) Sonata in D of 1915 is probably one of the most celebrated cello sonatas of the twentieth century: it is original, is well crafted for the cellist, and is universally

appealing, therefore it can be judged on many levels of criteria for its value within the repertoire. His original voice is achieved through the unique harmonic language of lush chords that emphasize quartal relationships, modal and whole tone scales, and the most delicate tonal colors. The sonata is also original in its vivid imagery; an astonishing array of abruptly contrasting textures and moods portray the personification of the Harlequin/Pierrot character (Debussy gave the work the unofficial title of “Pierrot, angry with the moon”⁶) through dreams, violent *pizzicato* outbursts, grotesque dynamic surges, florid passage work, and declamatory passages. Cello technique was extended through numerous techniques that were considered new for cello at the time or were reserved only for orchestral music. These include *sur la touché*- “on the fingerboard”, *flautando*-“with floating bow”, *sur le chevalet*- “on the bridge” (*ponticello*), snapped pizzicatos, imitations of guitar pizzicato, false harmonics, and *portato*-“carrying the bow” (or pulsing the bow). In the three movements (the second and third are played *attacca*), every phrase is carefully crafted for the specific timbre and textural effect desired by Debussy, making the work stand out from every cello work that preceded it. Furthermore, the rate of change in texture and mood was new to cello repertoire; almost every measure contains numerous tone color and tempo instructions in the score. Cello Sonatas written within a few decades before are primarily romantically lyrical and broad in their ideas (such as the sonatas of Saint-Saëns, Chopin, Rachmaninoff, Franck, and Reger), whereas the Debussy Sonata is disjointed, fantastical, and quirky.

Elliot Carter’s (1908-) *Sonata for Violoncello and Piano* (1948) is his first work to use the complete integration of metric modulation (moving smoothly from one metronomic speed to

⁶ Robin Stowell, “The Sonata” in *Cambridge Companion to the Cello*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 130.

another by lengthening or shortening the value of the basic note unit). The remarkable feat is the seamless, lyrical way in which the cello melody of the first movement unfolds, while the piano part punctuates like clockwork. When looking at the intricately complex rhythmic language of the score, it is astonishing how the relationship between the distinct voices seems completely independent, effortless, and suspended in time. The harmonic language is atonal with the preference of larger, disjointed intervals, and also incorporates elements of jazz (walking bass, rhythmic idioms) and American-Negro melody.

Originality in composition has become a principle preoccupation of twentieth century composers, with each trying to establish a distinctive voice, a new innovation in style and/or technique, or a new approach to established traditions. There are a myriad of stylistic trends that emerge in the twentieth century with several recognizable and original representative composers, resulting in the largest variety and range of compositional voices of any century. With many of these styles struggling for exposure and public acceptance, we cannot yet fully establish which works will be considered important and stand the test of time. As the history of music tells us, there were many instances of original works that were initially shunned by audiences and only later became recognized as innovative turning points in style. The lesson learned from observing trends in current musical taste and how it affects the acceptance of original thought is to better appreciate and recognize the importance of original thought if music is to thrive.

Chapter 7

Criteria: Strongly Representing an Established Style

Twentieth century music has encompassed numerous stylistic trends that have expanded every aspect of musical thought. The trends can be distinguished in many ways, including by school of compositional style originating in the United States and Europe (i.e. geographically), by compositional technique (i.e. the appropriate 'ism'), and by medium of communication (i.e. acoustic versus electronic). The result is a myriad of works (or composers) that represent a myriad of styles spanning a short period of time, therefore, the establishment of a particular stylistic trend is determined more rapidly than in previous centuries. Moreover, only one or two composers may represent a particular style, resulting in a larger number of composers contributing representational works of twentieth century idioms than in previous centuries (when only a handful of composers fully represented an entire era). When only one or two composers represent a particular style (seen most clearly in retrospect), one must determine if their compositional style was significant enough to deserve its own style category (and therefore one or more of their works would be hailed as a strong representation of their style, as in the case of Bach's Art of the Fugue, Mozart late Symphonies, or Beethoven's Ninth Symphony) or if their style better fits the criteria of originality within a broader stylistic category (as in Karlheinz Stockhausen's groundbreaking work of controlled chance in total serialism). Defining what encompasses a distinctive style is subjective: Does the composer's original voice conform enough to an identifiable quality of a broader style category to warrant its inclusion as a subgenre or sub-style (for example, electronic music has several subgenres), or is their voice distinctive enough to warrant its own style category (as in Harry Partch's custom-made instruments for his

own 43-tone scale)? The answer can be discovered through distinguishing significant styles from negligible ones through observing its longevity, the fecundity of its ideas, and its subsequent influence on twentieth century music. Once the significant styles are determined and a principle figure(s) within the style is established, strong examples of the style are recognized through the composer(s)'s most representational works.

Highlighting the works that best represent a particular stylistic trend, (even if that trend is not publically accepted), will help to predict its longevity, validity, and future importance in the development of music. Many twentieth century composers and their works came to represent a style through expanding aspects of a stylistic trend already in motion, as in Schoenberg's Expressionist work *Verklärte Nacht*, Berg's use of several tone rows in his *Lyric Suite*, or the synthesis of European *avant garde* ideas of counterpoint and all-interval chords in the mature style of Carter's *String Quartet No. 2*. Other works represent the fully realized concept of a style that a particular composer had created, such as Schoenberg's twelve tone system in *Fünf Klavierstücke*, or Boulez's total serialism of *Structures I*. The examples of serialism and European *avant garde* are considered significant style genres due to their prominence in twentieth century musical composition that spanned decades, the amount of growth in the musical language they produced, and the profound influence they had on other composers.

The variety of 'isms' that came into being during the twentieth century are as numerous as they are contrasting from one another. When looking back on the stylistic genres of the twentieth century, significantly influential styles are frequently determined and categorized in a way that groups composers together either hierarchically according to leader and followers of a style, or based on commonalities within the methods of their compositions. If one flips through a

textbook on twentieth century music, the century is commonly broken up into stylistic eras that concentrate in various countries or schools: beginning with the *avant-garde* of Germany and Austria (Progressive Romantics, Atonality, Twelve-tone method, Expressionism); the *avant-garde* of France (Symbolism, Impressionism, French Romantics); the *avant-garde* of Russia (The Russian Five); the Nationalism of Eastern Europe, Scandinavia, and England; Neoclassicism in France, Germany, England, and United States; Populism in American Music; Experimental Music in America; the revival of *avant-garde* (Atonality, Serialism, Total Serialism); Indeterminacy in America and Europe; Electronic Music (*Musique concrete*, Pure Electronic Music, Recorded music with Electronic and Concrete Sounds, Live Performance with Taped Sounds, Live Electronic Music); Eclecticism; Minimalism; and Recent Trends.⁷ With so many different styles to examine, the easiest way to understand the style would be to consolidate the composers who contributed to the 'ism' or trend, and discuss their various key works as examples. The problem is, every composer of the twentieth century is unique, as one of the main preoccupations and objectives of twentieth century composers is to produce something new. For example, Schoenberg, Webern and Berg are grouped together as the twelve-tone school (Second Viennese School), yet their individual styles are so distinct and easily discernable that it would be impossible to mistake one composer for another. Therefore, there may be many strong representatives of a style if the style itself has significant duration, fecundity, and influence. What the textbooks attempt to portray is how one can categorize and lump together the music of very different composers, whereas what one hopes will be distilled in retrospect is the impact that particular composers have made on the development of music. On early twentieth century composers, George Rochberg writes:

⁷ Simms, *Music of the Twentieth Century: Style and Structure*, vii-x.

Whatever the changes in external style and technique, there was about the depth music of this period- the music of Schoenberg, Stravinsky, Bartók, Ives, Webern, or Berg- the sense of the supremely conscious effort to link up with the great traditions established by the masters of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. It seems perfectly clear now, though it was much less clear fifty years ago, that these composers were not radicals and revolutionaries but rather great conservatives, each with his own vision and voice, each stamping his music with the signature of his creative personality, each expanding the possibilities and dimensions of musical expression out of personal necessity rather than willful, arbitrary motivation. We value their discoveries today because they speak to us in expressive terms, and because it is the record of human experience which they have captured in these terms that validates their technical discoveries and innovations and not the other way around.⁸

We must celebrate the individual and original voice of each composer, and come to a judgment of historical and cultural significance through their contributions to twentieth century music, not to which 'ism' they belonged.

Certain styles are in danger of having little influence on future generations and therefore less deserving of a representational composer or work due to the current inaccessibility to the public. As in serialism of the 1920s and 1930s that experienced a second surge of growth in the 1950s and onward through total serialism, certain stylistic trends may have the opportunity to experience a second apex if there has been adequate exposure. With so many divergent styles existing mostly in textbooks instead of in concert halls, heard only by a small population of twentieth-century music enthusiasts, we must educate the public on the variety that twentieth century music offers by bringing forth a concentrated selection of works that represent the lesser-heard stylistic trends. The explosion of music in the twentieth century (not even taking into account the activity in popular music, jazz, blues, world music, etc.) appears to have produced a

⁸ George Rochberg, *The Aesthetics of Survival: A Composer's View of Twentieth-Century Music*, (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1984), 151.

significantly larger amount of works to study than any other time in the history Western Music. Although the public may assume that twentieth century music is too modern, there are a plethora of styles that would intrigue the novice listener if they were only presented with some regularity and sense of context. For example, the public at large is already familiar with several twentieth century works or idioms without knowing it, such as the “O Fortuna” opening of Orff’s *Camina Burana* of 1937, or of John Adams’ minimalist music that predates techno music, or of Philip Glass’s numerous film scores (including such blockbusters as *The Candyman* (1992 & sequel 1995), *The Hours* (2002), *No Reservations* (2007), and even the videogame *Grand Theft Auto IV*). In the cello repertoire, several works are culturally significant due to their representation of a style, particularly Shostakovich’s *Sonata in D minor, Op. 40*, and Britten’s *Three Suites for Cello Opp. 72, 80, and 87*.

Certain stylistic genres are isolated to a particular country due to social conditions while very different styles exist elsewhere, as seen in the conservative style of social realism in the Soviet Union. Nationality is at the heart of the Russian school of the Stalin Era, although the way that Nationality was ‘supposed to sound’ was dictated to composers of that era, allowing us to observe through their works the forced cultural ideals of a communist nation. While neoclassicism was at its zenith in most of Europe and the Americas, Russian composers could not freely express themselves under the policies of the Soviet Union, and were forced to embrace the ideas of socialist realism (realistic, purposeful art that served to further the goals of socialism and communism, the officially approved type of art from 1917 through the Soviet Union’s demise). Composers who authored works within these restrictions (that underwent several changes of severity) included Kabalevsky, Shostakovich, and Prokofiev. Shostakovich’s *Sonata in D minor* represents the apex of the Soviet social realism style as an important work that

presents a powerful statement of restrained dignity, stark beauty, humor, and rebellion all at once.

Shostakovich's (1906-1975) Sonata in D minor Op. 40 of 1934 hints of the lyrical post-romantic with its long lines, but its predominant style is neoclassical with a texture that is much more transparent, use of modal scales, astringent harmonies, sharp contrasts, and (typical of Shostakovich) moments of sarcasm and the grotesque. One can almost imagine the stark landscape of Russia in the wandering cello melodies and frequent use of the hollow harmonics in the first movement, while the third slow movement is so devastatingly desolate and tender all at once. The relentlessly rhythmic second movement plays between a peasant theme and a military theme, and the fourth movement is playfully sadistic. All of these representational themes are common in Shostakovich's compositions, particularly the sarcastic use of grotesque military themes that covertly accentuates the nature of Soviet Union patriotism, and demonstrate that propaganda music in the hands of a master composer has many deeper levels of cultural significance. The *Sonata for Cello and Piano, Op. 40* is a work that strongly represents the Soviet socialist realism style in Shostakovich's careful crafting of patriotic themes (however sarcastic we now interpret these themes to be) within traditional form.

Benjamin Britten (1913-1976) contributed several popular works to the cello repertoire through his collaboration with Rostropovich, including three solo suites, *Sonata in C* for cello and piano, and *Symphony for Cello and Orchestra*. Although all are performed, the solo suites are especially liked by cellists for their universal appeal, beauty, virtuosity, and extended use of cello technique. The music of Britten (in retrospect) strongly represents the style of twentieth century modern British music, not only in Britten's neoclassical compositional stance of tonality

when it was not the stylistic norm (and thus his music has remained popular posthumously), but for his influence over subsequent generations of British composers as a key figure in the growth of British culture over the second half of the twentieth century. The harmonic language is based on tonality, but being for a single performer, melodic and motivic development of each contrasting dance idiom is a more prominent feature that allows it to communicate easily with the audience. The first suite consists of neo-baroque dance forms (*Fuga, Lamento, Serenata, Marcia, Bordone*) interspersed with 'cantos' primo through quarto, while the second and third suites omit the reoccurring canto sections and contain a mix of dance form titles (*Fuga, Ciaccona, Marcia, Barcarola, Passacaglia*), absolute titles (*andante lento*), and descriptive titles (*Declamato, Introduzione, Canto, Dialogo, Recitativo, Moto Perpetuo*). His style was very influential in Britain and created great growth in the 'rebirth' of British music.

The criteria of strongly representing an established style presents several obstacles in twentieth century music. The century witnessed a myriad of styles that changed rapidly, causing problems of having too many original styles to represent, too much variety in composers' styles that supposedly fit into a single category, and too many styles that might not satisfy the assessment of duration, fecundity, and influence to determine their ability to withstand the test of time. Moreover, a particular style could consist of only one or two composers, adding the task of distinguishing the important styles from the derivative ones. In this regard, the composers who alone represent a style, their works would be considered to better represent the contrasting criteria of originality since the issue becomes more a study of a composer's own style instead of a representing a whole style genre. In other words, the duration of the style, the growth in music it created, or resulting influence was too minimal to consider it an established style. Because of

these issues, the criteria of strongly representing an established style is perhaps a weaker or less reliable criteria in twentieth century music than in any previous century.

Chapter 8

Criteria: Beauty

The very idea of beauty is a difficult criteria to discern, as “beauty is in the eye of the beholder,” or in this case, “in the ear.” The judgment criteria of beauty is a subject of great debate due to its subjective nature. What qualities make a piece of music beautiful? Can beauty be tangibly described with a particular style of music of which one has become accustomed (i.e. a function of environment and therefore a learned quality)? Or does the perception of beauty in music run deeper as a function of hard-wiring in the brain where syntax and comprehensibility are more important? In either case, the underlying force is familiarity, although deciphering a few objective qualities in the content of the music, such as tonality, melodic interest (‘tunefulness’), clarity of texture and structure, symmetric phrases, tone quality and timbre (ex. the cello as a bel canto instrument has beautiful rich tone), and emotional impact will better illuminate the elements that are deeply entrenched in the individual’s perception of music. If greater exposure to twentieth century works is the objective to gain this familiarity, understanding the stereotypical ideas of beauty in music can be a very valid reason for choosing successful programming for the general public. As most listeners are not exposed to twentieth century music on a regular basis, if at all, they have not developed a taste for the more dissonant harmonies, more complex rhythmic structures, and new sound possibilities, (although only a fraction of twentieth century music possesses all of these qualities). Furthermore, as musical taste has slowly developed over the twentieth century (despite the noticeable lack of exposure as compared to works of previous centuries), many works that were once scorned for being too different are now celebrated. By comparing and contrasting the qualities deemed beautiful of the

most commonly performed twentieth century cello works, we will get closer to an objective argument to illustrate why such qualities are celebrated.

Twentieth century music has seen an interesting split between “art music” and “popular music” that raises several questions in the definition of beauty. The elitist or unfamiliar element of “art music” is in opposition to commercialization and universal appeal, while unfamiliar new techniques or sounds have more difficulty resonating personal meaning because they lack an “average” quality or standard of comparison. Music that gets the label of “beautiful” is often tonal, symmetrical, full of recognizable melodies, and traditional in style (as in classical or romantic); these are all aspects of musical syntax. Pleasure and satisfaction is derived from music that balances tension and release (versus the constant dissonance of atonality), and that demonstrates clear lines and congruent textures (versus dense harmonies and overly-complex motivic interplay). As bitterly observed by Charles Ives, “Beauty in music is too often confused with something that lets the ear lie back in an easy chair.”⁹ Therefore, tonality and tuneful thematic unity seem to be of particular importance; twentieth century styles that incorporate more dissonant harmonies, atonality, or serialism seem to lack universal appeal. This is due to the fact that tonality has been the norm since the sixteenth century, therefore the emancipation from tonality within the last century seems to pose problems of familiarity. This is exacerbated by the current culture of “old music is good music”, where the concert-going audience primarily listens to music from the Baroque through Romantic eras.

Keeping in mind the over-saturation of “old music” in concert programming, how much does personal preference contribute to the perception of beauty? How much does one’s taste for

⁹ Simms, *Music of the Twentieth Century: Style and Structure*, 299.

the familiar factor in, and what factors affect the development of individual taste outside of the familiar? Is there an element of hard-wiring in our brains that contributes to the preference of particular styles? In the discussion of the problems of *avant garde* music as it relates to the parallel (simultaneous streams of pitch relations) and serial (the continuous flow of their temporal movement) ordering in our brains, George Rochberg comments:

The continued pleasure in the music of the past may have its true source not in cultural reasons per se but in the very structure of our central nervous system. Which is to say that the continued performance and popularity of Mozart, Beethoven, Chopin, Tchaikovsky, and Brahms among others rest on the fact that their music is organized at high levels of clearly designed parallel, or ensemble, relations which in turn are dominated, controlled, and guided by clear serial patterns of musical thought. So it is that even twentieth century composers like Stravinsky, Bartók, and Prokofiev have established themselves solidly in the repertoire, not because we have grown accustomed to having their sound around, but because there is a deep connection between how their music is made and how we are made. The answer to the question of why Schoenberg is not yet fully accepted into the repertoire, even though his music has been around as long certainly as Stravinsky's may lie precisely in an understanding of these matters under discussion.¹⁰

If these organizational processes in the brain that occur when music is perceived are governing our preference for tonal music, then the understanding of a work resides in its familiarity within our brain's organizational functions. Considering we must learn our native language through repetition and recall to form these organizational systems within our language and logic systems in the brain, then certain aspects of these connections formed in our brains are learned and not innate. George Rochberg goes on to comment how experience of music through repetition and recall affects our perception:

The potential perceptual meaning for each of us individually of musical stimuli, i.e. message systems, increases with the increase of conscious attentive awareness. If this is true- the question is how to corroborate it- the implications are very great and far-reaching. At the very least, the pulse-trains which transmit messages in the nervous

¹⁰ Rochberg, *The Aesthetics of Survival*, 220.

system suggest a direct correspondence with the logic of musical events characterized by structural continuity based on self-perpetuating forms of repetition and recall.¹¹

Therefore, a margin of success of less familiar genres can be attributed to an individual's environment and experience with a particular genre- if someone is brought up on a strict diet of tonal, nineteenth century music, then their musical tastes develop in that particular syntax of the musical language. Increased exposure to newer idioms makes the new 'dialect' of twentieth century language more understandable to the listener, and finding beauty is therefore possible and "study and intensified experience of any musical system potentially increases and enhances the joy of response and understanding"¹². By infusing concerts with a richer diet of twentieth century works, the public's tastes will adapt and more readily accept the regular inclusion of non-standard repertoire. Already we can observe the evolution of musical taste through the example of Schubert; his music was ill-received because it was considered too advanced during his lifetime, while shortly after his death he was celebrated.

In the cello repertoire, many of the most celebrated and frequently performed twentieth century works have some aspect of universal beauty. Due to the lyrical tone quality and rich timbre of the cello, many composers found a way to express their personal musical voice in a universally appealing way, such as in the sonatas of Rachmaninoff, Fauré, Poulenc, and Barber.

At the beginning of the century, Rachmaninoff's (1873-1943) Sonata Op. 19 (1901) represents Russian late Romanticism with its pronounced lyricism, rich tonal palette, expressive breadth (especially in the most expressive Lento third movement), and well-crafted sonata structures. This work is rooted in the Russian spiritual tradition premised on the concept that the

¹¹ Ibid., 228.

¹² Ibid., 229.

artist's role is to create beauty. The harmonies are tonally based, the melodies are sweeping and memorable, the emotional communication is straightforward and effective. This sonata sets itself apart from its romantic predecessors in its depth of lyricism, emotional capacity, and universal appeal- making it one of the most popular cello sonatas.

Many stylistic features of French music of the early twentieth century epitomize the criteria of beauty and universal appeal, securing a place for the works of Fauré and Poulenc in popular cello repertoire. Some of the qualities that contribute to its beauty are the tonal language of extended luxurious harmonies, and the distinct emotional dream-like state of mind it produces. On a more traditional style is Fauré (1845-1924) who contributed two sonatas (Op. 109 in 1917 and Op. 117 in 1921) that are quite romantic in style, more in the manner of Brahms but with modal melodies and an extended harmonic language where seventh and ninth chords are considered consonant. His most universally appealing stylistic trend is his use of melody- even his instrumental works demonstrate his status as the master of French song, as well as his intensive exploitation of motifs and accomplished counterpoint. His many short pieces composed earlier in his career are performed with great regularity because of their popularity.

Of the French group Les Six, Poulenc (1899-1963) wrote a sweeping sonata of advanced difficulty, Cello Sonata Op. 143 (1948), that is slowly gaining stature within the twentieth century cello sonata repertoire. The sonata features abrupt mood and character shifts, a rich texture, and lush harmony. Many of its virtuosic qualities combined with a more tonally-oriented harmonic language contribute to its universal appeal and hopefully a permanent place among twentieth century cello repertoire.

Reminiscent of the romantic language of Brahms and Rachmaninoff, Samuel Barber's (1910-1981) Sonata Op. 6 (1932) takes a conservative approach to the genre despite its later date. It is a particularly beautiful sonata with traditional harmony, lyrical tuneful melodies, transparent emotional content, and clear texture and structure. The clear definition of mood and its build to climax is of particular importance in its universal appeal.

All of the above works demonstrate the reliance on tonality and traditional structure that fall easily into the average understanding of syntax in the language of music. These works are pleasing to listen to, display a balance of emotion between the comforting and the exciting, the tonal language is familiar without being boring, and the cello is featured as a lyrical and melancholic voice. These works do not push the boundaries of familiarity; they are in a style that is within the average person's environmental exposure to concert music, and are easy to follow in terms of understandable musical syntax due to their roots in common practice harmony and form. Yet, the criteria of beauty alone cannot render a work important, as human nature also craves variety in combination with elements of familiarity, therefore a more complete evaluation that includes other successful criteria (such as originality, craft of motivic interest, or representing a style at its apex) is necessary. However, one hopes that through increased exposure to less comfortable styles, the musical ear will continue to evolve to allow for a broader definition of beauty in music.

Chapter 9

Criteria: Public Acceptance

In many ways, public acceptance is what drives the performer's choice of repertoire for a given concert. The performer wants the audience to have a meaningful and emotional experience when attending a live concert, and the performer must therefore take into consideration who his or her audience is. How large is the audience? What has the audience come to expect from the performer or the ensemble or even the performance venue? Is the audience interested in a particular type of music, and will a portion of unexpected or unfamiliar programming be given a fair hearing? However, public acceptance is also an important aspect of a publisher or recording company's choice of project. A work's place in the repertoire is affected by its availability to a performer through the published score at a reasonable price, and the availability of a recording for the performer's research or the interest of a music enthusiast.

For larger ensembles, determining the type of audience and fulfilling the 'political' requirements that dictate aspects of production are very real problems in North America. The symphonic orchestra probably has the most difficulty with pleasing a conservative audience (i.e. an audience primarily interested in the familiar 'great' works of the common practice period) and gaining public acceptance of its programming. Many levels of financial support depend on pleasing various populations of this relatively large audience; funds to run an orchestra must be collected from a wide range of sources, including corporations, governmental grants, private donations, and ticket sales. As discussed earlier, Canadian orchestras would commission works from Canadian composers, but would restrict the time limit to ten minutes; an acceptable length to keep all parties satisfied, from the requirements of government grants for new commissions to

the limits of extra rehearsal time and effort on behalf of the performers to the tolerance of the unfamiliar for the conservative audience. This demonstrates some of the political restraints placed on a composer commissioned for a new work, but the problem of exposure for countless twentieth century works is compounded by numerous other factors affecting the ability of an orchestra to program twentieth century works. Statistical information commonly found on a major orchestra's concert leaflet, such as when each piece was composed, first premiered, first played by the particular orchestra, and when it was last played by the orchestra, offers a glimpse at the pattern of programming of the various works on a program. Factors that contribute to the freedom of programming twentieth century works include the ability of the orchestra (internationally recognized, average city orchestra, or community orchestra), the size and makeup of the audience (where metropolitan cities such as L.A. or New York can draw a large audience for more unusual programming), the desires and tastes of the conductor who decides elements of programming (as some conductors have specialties or preferences in particular works), or the specialty of the guest performer. The unfortunate reality of programming to sell tickets and fill the concert hall is a result of the particular combination of aforementioned factors, yet it is important to constantly expand and challenge the public to experience new works by inserting lesser known works.

Recitalists often have an easier time programming unfamiliar or new works, provided the program is balanced with old standards and works of a variety of genres and styles. The many aforementioned factors that contribute to an orchestra's programming do not fully apply to the recitalist, as the music is chosen by the performers themselves and not by a director or committee. In most cases, the audience is attending the concert to watch a particular performer play, (as opposed to the broader audience of an orchestra that considers the program when

purchasing tickets), therefore the performer can play what he or she chooses. For example, Elliott Carter's *Sonata for Cello and Piano* (1948) discussed earlier for its originality could be more easily performed in recital than an orchestral work such as Carter's *Variations for Orchestra* (1954-55). Because of "star factor", individual performers also have the freedom to seek out their own interests in programming while an orchestral musician has no freedom of choice. Many Canadian works could be featured as United States premieres, and through grants and other funding, commissioning new works is also an exciting way to honor your audience with a world premiere.

Of standard repertoire twentieth century cello works, all have been published (some in a variety of editions) and are readily available to purchase through any large music store or distributor. Through an informal survey of cellist colleagues and an assimilation of a variety of repertoire lists¹³, some of the most recognized large-scale twentieth century cello works include the cello and piano sonatas of Rachmaninoff, Shostakovich, Prokofiev, Debussy, Fauré, Poulenc, Barber, Carter; the solo sonatas of Cassadó, Hindemith, Kodály, Ligeti, and Crumb, and the suites of Stravinsky and Britten. The publishers representing those works include International, Boosey & Hawkes, Schirmer, Peters, Schott, Hal Leonard, Universal Edition, Masters Music, and Faber Music. The stature of the publishing companies that publish these works also gives weight to the work's public acceptance, since they are businesses interested in selling multiple scores and want to publish the most profitable works. Countless recordings are available of these

¹³ Elizabeth Cowling, *The Cello*, Stowell, "The Sonata" in *The Cambridge Companion to the Cello*, 116-136. William Pleeth, *Cello*, (London: Halstan & Co. Ltd, 2002), 269-282. *Cello Syllabus of The Royal Conservatory of Toronto*, (Ontario: The Frederick Harris Music Co. Ltd, 2007). David A Littrell, ed., *String Syllabus of the American String Teachers' Association, Volume 1*, (Bloomington: Tichenor Publishing, 1997).

works, although not near as many as the Beethoven Sonatas or the great romantic cello concertos such as Dvorak, Saint-Saens, and Elgar.

Programming one of the standard cello works is much more common as the standard for artistic prominence continues to rise through media exposure, particularly as cellists look to assert their own voice as performers and choose to make a more individual artistic interpretation with a work that has not been recorded by the legendary cellists such as Casals, Rostropovich, or Yo Yo Ma. With that said, the aforementioned legends' contribution to twentieth century repertoire has revolutionized the repertoire and raised the cello to its current prominent status. Casals, aside from being one of the most celebrated cellists of all time, discovered the Unaccompanied Bach Suites that have become the centerpiece of cello repertoire. Rostropovich has premiered, commissioned, and collaborated with many distinguished composers (Prokofiev, Shostakovich, Britten, Lutoslawski, Dutilleux, and Penderecki) to produce several of the twentieth century cello works that are now standard repertoire- he has expanded the cello repertoire more than any other cellist and was the first performer of over 100 works¹⁴. Yo Yo Ma has bridged the abyss between the classical musician, the folk musician, the world music musician, and the popular musician with his many intriguing collaborations, becoming a household name. Never before has there been such a wealth of cello repertoire in so many idioms to create the most intriguing concert programming.

¹⁴ Olga Sobolevskaya, "Mstislav Rostropovich: musician of genius, man of honor" on Wikipedia.

Chapter 10:

Criteria: Accessibility to the Cellist

We will remember the twentieth century for producing the most prolific cello repertoire to date. From the early nineteenth century, the Sonata and Suite genres have been the principle vehicle to feature the cello. As the cello sonata's popularity grew through the Romantic Era alongside the cello concerto genre and 'concert piece', its complexity and virtuosity also increased. The status of the cello has been elevated to an almost equal level as the violin, thanks to the exceptional cellists of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries who raised the artistic and technical expectations for the cello, and inspired the great composers to contribute to the cello repertoire. Add to the higher technical demands on the instrumentalist, the language of music has undergone drastic changes throughout the twentieth century.

Idiomatic writing for the cello contributes greatly to technical ease, therefore a work that lies well on the cello goes hand in hand with its accessibility to a wider range of cellists. The way the pitches lie on the instrument often is the deciding factor of a work's difficulty, as works that have awkward passages, uncharacteristic fingering patterns, frequent use of high registers, or frequent large leaps automatically become more difficult to execute musically. As the cello emerged from its primary role of accompanimental instrument to a solo instrument through the Baroque and Classical eras, the works for cello that have lasted the test of time were primarily written by cellists (such as Boccherini, Duport, Romberg and Bréval), or composers who played the violin or viola (such as Bach, Vivaldi, and Haydn). With the exception of the Bach Suites and the Haydn D Major Concert, these works are noted for their excellent idiomatic writing but are less satisfying as great musical works. This is not to say these works survived solely for their

idiomatic writing or accessibility to the cellist, but when considering a complete evaluation of several criteria including the craft of motivic interest in the work, its beauty, and either its representation of a style at its apex or its originality, the works fall short of the whole package. Furthermore, many of the works from the late Baroque and early Classical eras are considered at an intermediate level by today's standards, as technical demands on the cellist have continued to increase to this day. But we could look to the example of the Beethoven Sonatas for both the shift in status of the cello as a worthwhile solo voice and the beginning of the marriage of excellent idiomatic writing combined with satisfying musical merit. In Beethoven's first two sonatas 'for Harpsichord or Pianoforte and Violoncello Obbligato' Op. 5, the cello is still in the subordinate role to the obbligato keyboard part, and the technical difficulty is intermediate while the level of artistry is demanding. It is not until his Op. 69 (1807-8) and 102 Nos. 1 and 2 (1815) that the cello becomes a true counterpart to the piano (although a cellist might quarrel how challenging it is to surpass in both volume and energy the force of the piano part!), and the technical difficulty level increases to match the required level of artistry. The only other notable work of Beethoven's contemporaries that even comes close to equaling the importance of his Cello Sonatas is Schubert's Sonata in A minor (D821, 1824), written for arpeggione and piano (transcribed for cello). Here, we can observe an example of a work that is so musically compelling that it has remained cherished by cellists and audiences alike, while the idiomatic writing for the cello is all wrong due to the fact it was written for a different instrument (that is now extinct).

The Romantic era ushered in a new love for the lyrical and dramatic qualities of the cello as well as an increase in its virtuosic capabilities; thus, the marriage between good idiomatic writing and a compelling artistic statement was well-established. When examining the works

that are still considered standard repertoire, the gap between those works that were written by cellists and those works written by the great composers of the time widens. The works written by cellists instead shifts to technical etudes and method books as well as intermediate level teaching pieces (by such composers as Goltermann, Franchomme, Dotzauer, Popper, Davidoff, and Piatti). The idiomatic writing for the instrument is exceptional, but the artistic statement is less successful. However, the status of the cello rose to attract the contribution of exceptional works by the great composers (such as Mendelssohn, Tchaikovsky, Brahms, Schumann, Saint-Saëns, Dvorák, Elgar, Fauré, Chopin, and Grieg); it is the works of the great Romantic composers that are now considered the core of cello repertoire. In most cases, the works are idiomatically written in a consistent difficulty level and therefore easier to execute with artistic flair, but some repertoire seems to remain awkward and inconsistent in overall ease of execution and difficulty. Some examples of the later include Brahms' second cello sonata with its challenging two-string tremolo passages, Dvorák's Cello Concerto with its high arpeggiated passages, and Tchaikovsky's *Rococo Variations* with its high leaping elegant passages. Yet, because of the tremendous importance of these works, these technical problems are accepted.

Instrumental music of the twentieth century has seen an explosion of new techniques through the demands of the various stylistic trends and innovations, and as a result, the overall technical difficulty level of cello works has increased. Because of all of the extended techniques and harmonic language, twentieth century works are inherently more challenging for cellists as many technical and artistic problems exist in a single work. Probably the most challenging aspect of change for a string player, though, comes through the expansion, redefinition, and eventual dismissal of tonality. Where eighteenth and nineteenth century works extended the

lyrical and dramatic demands on the cellist, twentieth century works pushed the limits of instrumental topography. As a string player relies heavily on his or her ears combined with muscle memory of the instrument to successfully play the pitches of a composition, many twentieth century cello works present challenges of intonation due to constant leaps of dissonant intervals and frequent use of very high registers. Therefore, the idiomatic writing for the cello has become less important to composers in place of expanding the musical language, and as a result, many works are extremely challenging to execute. Perhaps this challenge explains the popularity amongst cellists of twentieth century works that are more tonally oriented, such as the late-romantic idiom of Rachmaninoff's *Sonata in G minor, Op. 119*, or Debussy's modal late-impressionistic *Sonata*, or the more conservative social realist sonatas of Shostakovich and Prokofiev. Interestingly, the twelve-tone system is little represented in standard cello repertoire, even though the system influenced countless composers for other genres. Neoclassicism was developed after World War I as a reaction to the overwrought Abstract Expressionism. Such composers were striving for balanced form, more sparse and orderly textures, and the economy of smaller ensembles, while the advanced harmony was distinctly twentieth century (and not an imitation of antiquated style). A large quantity of cello compositions can be considered neoclassical, with many principle figures of neoclassicism composing cello works, including Stravinsky, Hindemith, Prokofiev, Poulenc, Martinů, Elliott Carter, and Milhaud. Although neoclassicism peaked between the two World Wars, its style was still impressionable into the 1950s and 1960s. Post World War II saw many social changes, and many stylistic trends developed: serialism expanded to include every aspect of notation (total serialism), rhythmic language evolved through changing meter and metric modulation, avant-garde genres expanded again our definition of "music" with microtonal music, chance music, electronic music, *musique*

concrète, innovative uses of instruments and/or non-instruments, and eventually minimalism.

Although there are several cello works that utilize more experimental idioms, they are not considered part of the standard repertoire (with the exception of Elliot Carter's *Sonata for Cello and Piano*).

Many influential cello sonatas were composed during the twentieth century, but only a handful are incorporated into standard cello repertoire, with few scores readily available or accessible for performance. While there are several celebrated twentieth century works entitled sonata for cello and piano (generally late-romantic, neoclassical, or neo-romantic in style), the title and/or the genre fell out of fashion during the twentieth century because of its association with previous centuries. Several multi-movement works bear descriptive titles or are entitled *Duo*, but still fall into the genre due to their sonata parameters. More experimental works have dismissed the genre due to its traditional implications, falling more into the category of performance art or show/concert piece. The incorporation of electronic media such as prepared tape introduced a new genre to the cello repertoire in the second half of the twentieth century.

The expansion of technique has led to many new sound possibilities for the cello. Expanded bow techniques include unusual placement of the bow: *sul tasto* (on the fingerboard) gives a very delicate soft timbre, while *ponticello* (on the bridge) gives an icy and brittle timbre. *Pizzicato* technique has exploded, including fast passages, strummed passages, snapped *pizzicato* (where the string is lifted and snaps back to make a very percussive sound), and left hand *pizzicato* while a separate line is played *arco* (with the bow) on another string. Left hand technique (including one's sense of pitch and knowledge of the fingerboard) is expanded through extreme use of register, false harmonics (where the thumb stops the string on the desired pitch

class and the third finger plays the harmonic a fourth above to create a pitch an octave above the thumb), extended use of natural harmonics, expanded tonality, atonality, and use of microtonality. Some examples of standard works that incorporate use of extended techniques include the Debussy Sonata (extended bow color techniques, snapped and strumming *pizzicato* effects) and the Shostakovich Sonata (use of false and natural harmonics). The move to add extended techniques in more *avant garde* and experimental works in cello repertoire has increased since these innovative Sonatas, but their popularity amongst cellists and audiences has yet to propel them into standard cello repertoire.

Stravinsky's (1882-1971) contribution to the cello repertoire of *Suite Italienne* (1932) is a neo-baroque setting of Italian dance-forms (*Introduzione, Serenata, Aria, Tarantella, Minuetto e Finale*) that get successively more complex and difficult to play as they progress. Comical in their very traditional presentation of the dances, Stravinsky uses striking interjections of odd harmonic colorings, rhythmic peculiarities, and textural juxtapositions to remember its twentieth century idiom and keep the audience interested. Overall, because of the tonal underpinning and familiar structural and melodic forms, the work is very 'playable' and accessible to the cellist.

The Poulenc *Sonata for Cello and Piano* is a worthwhile work that would be considered advanced in difficulty, particularly in its unprepared leaps into high registers and fast passages in both *arco* and *pizzicato*. The harmonic language is much more accessible as it is tonally based with lush, extended harmonies. Much like Stravinsky's *Suite Italienne*, the work seems to get more difficult as it unfolds. The playful third movement contains many fast and technically challenging passages, while the fourth movement explores different tone colors with a slow introduction in *ponticello* and is followed by a virtuosic final movement.

Examining the criteria of accessibility to the cellist allows us to weigh the technical issues against the musical merit of a work. This breaks down to examining how the idiomatic writing for the instrument affects the overall difficulty level of a work, while considering if the impact on the audience is worth the effort. The cellist must therefore choose works that they will be able to successfully execute in order to properly convey the artistic message of a work that may not be readily understood by the audience. Although the audience loves to witness great technical feats, the ultimate reason for presenting a twentieth century work should be to convince the audience of a work's musical merit, however outside of the norm it may be. The challenge lies in deciphering which aspects of a work's musical merit are worth championing and in what setting, since many twentieth century idioms often force us to accept that all of these criteria may not be met at once. The ideal would be to present a well-crafted, innovative work that is both well-written and appeals to the audience.

Conclusion

The distinction of six criteria of judgment provides the tools to musicians and music enthusiasts to become more active in discovering twentieth century music. Through understanding the factors that shape twentieth century music as outlined in the above chapters, a subjective experience can become a more objective one. The six criteria have been discussed in order of most applicable or specific to twentieth century works through to those of lesser or changing significance. We have seen how the components of craft have shifted in twentieth century works to prioritize motivic development over harmony and voice leading, how originality has become the preoccupation of twentieth century composers, and how strongly representing an established style is a criteria of many subtleties due to the variety of twentieth century styles. The criteria of beauty is subjective because it relies on comfort and familiarity, and therefore applies less wholly to the expansive and experimental nature of twentieth century works. The problems of public acceptance are articulated through the difficulties that twentieth century works have in exposure and importance within our current society. Finally, the most specific chapter to the cellist outlined the technical innovations of the century, the important works to seek out, and how to continue to evaluate and champion more twentieth century cello works. In Part III, the criteria will be applied to three Canadian cello works that I feel deserve a place in the repertoire, and their importance can therefore be judged on many levels as opposed to simply analytically

PART III:

Biographies of Canadian Composers and Their Works:

Jean Coulthard and *Sonata for Cello and Piano (1947)*

Sophie-Carmen Eckhardt-Gramatté and *Duo Concertante (1959)*

André Prévost and *Sonate no.2 pour violoncelle et piano (1985)*

Chapter 11:

Jean Coulthard and *Sonata for Cello and Piano*

About the Composer

Jean Coulthard (b. Vancouver 1908- d. Vancouver 2000) was a celebrated Canadian composer and teacher. She began piano and composition studies with her mother, absorbing the styles of Debussy and Ravel, followed by studies from 1924-8 with Jan Cherniavsky (piano) and Frederick Chubb (theory). From 1928-30, she attended the Royal College of Music in London on a scholarship awarded by the Vancouver Woman's Musical Club and studied with Kathleen Long, M.O. Morris, and Ralph Vaughan Williams. From 1934-6 she was head of the music department at St. Andrew's College in Vancouver, and from 1936-7 she was head of the music department at Queen's Hall School. Her early works consisted mostly of pieces for voice and piano, but was encouraged to write orchestral works through her studies with Arthur Benjamin in 1939. Her subsequent orchestral works composed over the next four years solidified her reputation in Canada. She continued to intermittently seek out instruction in composition during her career from Bernard Wagenaar (1945 and 1949), and Gordon Jacob in London (1965-6), as well as submitted compositions for criticism to Copland (1939), Schoenberg (1942), Milhaud (1942), Bartók (1944), and Nadia Boulanger (1955). Taking from these diverse influences, her music is robustly rhythmic, confined mostly to traditional cyclical forms, and rooted firmly in tonality with a unique 'Coulthardian' harmonic language that incorporates French-modernist extended harmony with polytonality (including bitonal and quartal harmonies) and alternative scales (modal and octatonic). Her style and harmonic language generally remained the same

throughout her long career (even through the pressure of being ‘too conservative’ as the decades saw several stylistic changes within Canada and internationally), with the exception of a few works in which she experimented with serialism and tone clusters¹.

At the University of British Columbia, Coulthard served from 1947-57 as lecturer in composition and from 1957-73 as a senior instructor. 1947 was a significant compositional year in which she wrote three large-scale instrumental works, of which two received CAPAC awards (*Sonata for Cello and Piano*, and *Piano Sonata*). Having assimilated all of her years of apprenticeship, her compositions of the late 1940s and early 1950s were beginning to attract international recognition. She received several awards during this time: from the 1948 London and 1952 Helsinki Olympiads, the McGill Chamber Music Award and the Alfred J. Clement Memorial Prize for *First String Quartet*, a grant from the American Learned Societies (the first Canadian to receive this grant), an Australian Broadcasting Commission prize for *First Symphony*, and a performance at the 1954 ISCM Festival in Haifa, Israel. In 1953, the CBC commissioned *A Prayer for Elizabeth* to mark the coronation of Queen Elizabeth II (as Canada is part of the British Commonwealth). She also had a close relationship with the Rolston family (well-known Canadian performers who also founded the Banff Centre for Fine Arts), who commissioned and premiered many of her chamber works. Despite all of the awards and recognition, because her music was outside of the current serial Canadian compositions of her university colleagues in the 1950s, Coulthard’s music was seen as conservative and romantic. (Interestingly, when post-modernism emerged twenty years later, Coulthard was considered a

¹ Christine Evelyn Crookall, “Jean Coulthard’s *Sonata for Cello and Piano*: A Confluence of Stylistic Tendencies”, DMA treatise, (Austin: The University of Texas at Austin, 2001), 50.

1950s post-modern pioneer²). On a Royal Society of Canada scholarship, she travelled to Paris in late 1955 (where she studied with Nadia Boulanger) and spent another six months of 1956 in the southern France. From this European influence, she began writing an opera (yet it was only completed in 1979 and finally premiered in concert form in 1993), and several other works show Boulanger's influence. She received numerous commissions in the late 1950s through 1960s, continuing to produce more complex works, and even wrote important teaching materials. These include commissions from the Vancouver International Festival (song cycle *Spring Rhapsody*), the Canada Council (*Violin Concerto*), and the Vancouver Symphony Orchestra (*This Land* and *Canada Mosaic*). Despite the numerous commissions, the stylistic trends of the 1950s (serialism) and the 1960s (neo-Dadaist and Abstract Expressionism) left her music neglected for its conservative neoclassic style.

After her retirement from University of British Columbia in 1973, Coulthard taught workshops and summer sessions at the J.J. Johannedsen's International School of the Arts (1973) and the Banff Centre (1978-9), where she later joined the faculty. In 1972 she co-founded with Alys Monod the Okanagan Music Festival for Composers. Her most frequently performed works include *Music to St. Cecilia* (1968), *Autumn Symphony* (1984), *Introduction and Three Folksongs* (1986, nominated for a Juno award in 1991) and *Symphonic Image: Of the North* (1989) are the most frequently performed of her works. Many of her works have been recorded by the CBC, the Canadian Music Center, Société nouvelle d'enregistrement, and a volume of Radio Canada International's *Anthology of Canadian Music* (1982) is dedicated to her music. On her seventieth birthday, she was named a Freeman of the City of Vancouver and an Officer of the Order of Canada- some of the highest awards of achievement in Canada. On her eightieth

² Crookall, "Jean Coulthard's Sonata for Cello and Piano: a Confluence of Stylistic Tendencies", 13.

birthday, she was awarded an honorary doctorate from the University of British Columbia, and subsequently an honorary doctorate from Concordia University in 1991. Coulthard's works maintain a lyric quality within the contemporary music language of twentieth century music. She is one of the first widely recognized Canadian composers of Western Canada.

Jean Coulthard has contributed greatly to Canadian cello works. She often wrote works with specific musicians available to perform them in mind (mostly local Vancouverites in her early career); The *Sonata* was written for her colleagues Ernst Friedlander and his wife, Marie. All of her other cello works were also written with a specific cellist (and sometimes pianist) in mind: *Symphonic Ode for Cello and Orchestra* (1965) was also written for the Friedlanders (but Ernst Friedlander died unexpectedly before the premiere in 1965 and the work has never been performed), *When Music Sounds* (1970) was written for cellist Claude Kenneson and pianist Sylvia Hunter, *Dopo Botticelli* (1985) for cellist Shauna Rolston and her mother pianist Isobel Rolston, *Duo Sonata for Violin and Cello* (1989) for violinist Tom Rolston and daughter Shauna Rolston, *Earth Music* (1986) written for young student cellists, *Tribute to Carmanah for Cello and Piano* (1996) for cellist Brian Mix and pianist Brenda Campbell, and (her last cello work completed just a month before she died) *Sonata for Solo Cello* (2000) dedicated again to Brian Mix.³

³ Crookall, 39-42.

Sonata for Cello and Piano (1946-47)

Jean Coulthard's *Sonata for Cello and Piano* is one of her most celebrated works, particularly in the attention it has received from the academic community (both specifically to the sonata and within her life's work) and from the music business (as the only work of the three studied in this thesis to be published and commercially recorded). In Jean Coulthard's personal catalogue, she considers this work to be her first large-scale chamber work, and has listed very few works written before 1940 (primarily voice and piano compositions.)⁴ The work was composed after her fruitful work with Bernard Wagenaar, the only teacher she felt taught her about the formal structures (in particular large-scale structures); from this point on, attention to form became an important trait of her compositions. In an interview with David Duke (her principal biographer), she credits the 1940s as a turning point in her compositional style where she had "found her own voice", and specifically, that her *Sonata for Cello and Piano* was the first composition written when she was truly confident in her own style.⁵ Coulthard's work is a strong and deserving work that serves several criteria well in its craft of development and structure, beauty, public acceptance, and accessibility to the cellist. Coulthard's use of traditional forms makes the work approachable, while her imaginative use of motives adds a modern flair. Jean Coulthard's style, while it is rooted in tonality and influenced by the French-modernist's brand of extended harmony, is its own unique harmonic language that blends traditional elements with polytonality and the use alternative scales. While her harmonic language characterizes her original voice, the work is a strong representative of the Neo-Romantic cello sonata style. Even at first hearing, the beauty of its lush harmonies and romantic

⁴ Jean Coulthard, "Catalogue of Works" unpublished list of works composed, written by hand and in typescript by Coulthard. Referenced in DMA treatise of Christine Crookall, 2001, 37.

⁵ Crookall, 38.

flair are obvious features. The work is among the better-known Canadian works for cello, and since it is also an accessible work for the cellist, the sonata is a great addition to the repertoire.

Examining the criteria of craft of motivic development and structure allows us to deconstruct the work in order to understand the separate components and how they affect the “final product.” The first movement of *Sonata for Cello and Piano* displays the most “textbook” application of sonata form of the three movements. As in a classical sonata, the first movement is in Sonata-Allegro form that presents two contrasting theme areas in the Exposition, fragments and expands these opposing ideas in the Development section, reiterates the original themes in the Recapitulation, and rounds off the form with a Coda. In Coulthard’s Sonata, there are four theme areas, but the themes are scored to reflect the two polar aesthetics that are prevalent in Coulthard’s works: the lyrical gentle character versus the heavier, more accented brooding character.⁶ Coulthard describes these two parallel styles found in her works (personified in the first two themes of the first movement, while the last two themes are derived from the first theme) as “First, the rippling lyrical nature of sunlight glinting on the stones of a small brook; second, more brooding, the depth of one’s being reflected in the deep fjords of the West Coast.”⁷ In *Sonata for Cello and Piano*, the Exposition (that begins in E minor) presents four main themes, each having a distinct melodic shape, rhythmic character, texture, and clear key center, but all unified by an element or elements from the opening material. While the four themes present different “tunes”, the texture and tempo of Themes A, C, and D (or otherwise A variant) are in the gentle rippling brook aesthetic while Theme B (marked *Allegro*) is more accented and brooding, thus ultimately reflecting the two aesthetics.

⁶ Crookall, 52.

⁷ CD insert notes from *CBC Anthology of Canadian Music* on Jean Coulthard, 1982.

The components of the opening theme present succinctly the motives that will be intricately woven throughout the movement, demonstrating her skill in the range of motivic development. Theme A (figure 11.1) ‘in a quietly flowing style’, is built from three motivic cells in the cello melody line: (a) the ascending cello figure comprising of perfect fifths and fourths; (b) the repeated dotted eighth-sixteenth ascending semitone; and (c) the falling figure of mixed dotted and even eighths in various jagged intervals. These cells play an important part in the motivic development of the movement.

Figure 11.1

Jean Coulthard

In a quietly flowing style

pp

p

The musical score for Figure 11.1 consists of three systems. The first system shows the cello melody line (bass clef) and the piano accompaniment (treble and bass clefs). The piano part features a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes in the left hand. The second system continues the piano accompaniment. The third system shows the cello melody line and piano accompaniment. The tempo/style is 'In a quietly flowing style'. Dynamics include piano (p) and pianissimo (pp).

Theme B (figure 11.2) abruptly shifts tempo as well as key area through the piano’s *moto perpetuo* ostinato figure and unprepared modulation to the C major key area, while the more brooding mood is set. Already the similar motivic content of each theme is showing its developmental characteristics, as the cello theme incorporates the (a) cell in its more impassioned line of Theme B. Returning to ‘*tempo as beginning, espressivo*’ in the transition material, Coulthard now begins to rework elements of Themes A and B to create a new Theme C

(figure 11.3). It is connected to the opening in both mood and rhythm (lulling dotted eighth-sixteenth), except now the melodic contour is comprised mostly of stepwise motion within the exotic-sounding G-sharp minor key center. Also helping to define the new theme is the addition of a new rhythmic element in the piano L.H. of syncopated sixteenths while the R.H. shadows the lulling dotted rhythm of the cello, resulting in a composite rhythm of constant sixteenth notes between the piano hands. This constant sixteenth note rhythm is quality reminiscent of Theme B's ostinato.

Figure 11.2:

The musical score for Figure 11.2 is marked 'Allegro' and consists of two systems of piano accompaniment. The first system shows the right hand (RH) playing a melodic line with a dotted eighth-sixteenth note rhythm, while the left hand (LH) plays a syncopated sixteenth-note pattern. The second system continues this texture, with the RH maintaining the melodic contour and the LH providing a steady sixteenth-note accompaniment. The key signature is G-sharp minor, and the time signature is 4/4.

Figure 11.3:



Theme D, while in the slower tempo of the ‘lulling’ aesthetic, also reflects the combination of elements from Themes A and B while remaining in Theme C’s key area of G sharp minor.

Theme D (*figure 11.4*) is a reprise of Theme A in rhythmic content and texture, using the (*a*) cell over a similarly structured piano part (right hand shadowing in same dotted or even eighth-note rhythm as the cello part, left hand in syncopated sixteenth notes), although it is not a complete restatement of the Theme A material. The distinction of Theme D is made apparent when several motivic ideas are reintroduced: the piano part plays Theme B’s ostinato figure, and the cello presents cells (*a*) and (*b*) in rhythmic augmentation to wind down the Exposition.

Figure 11.4:



The assertion of traditional form continues through the Development section, while her motivic fluidity is demonstrated as she works through elements of all theme groups. The tempo has accelerated throughout the transition to arrive at the 'brooding' tempo of *Allegro*, while the extensive piling and mixing of elements from the theme groups adds to the drama. While the Development section in traditional harmonic structure typically begin in the dominant key area before modulating, here Coulthard has returned to the opening key of E minor to begin the section with Theme A in its original key, but quickly explores other key areas. Theme A cell (a) followed by (b) appears extensively in the cello part (as well as remnants of cell (c)), repeated a step down each time. This restatement of motivic material in different key areas or in different voices is a unifying device that Coulthard uses frequently in the work. Cell (b) is used extensively in all three lines (now accented and impassioned) while the piano presents fragmented material of all themes (heard most distinctly through its rhythmic content). Other

aspects in the craft of the Development section that contribute to the dramatic build to climax include the frequent shifting and expansion of range, incorporating virtuoso new material in the cello (as in the first appearance of constant sixteenth note passages), and gauging the fragmentation of the motives to build with the thickening of texture.

As in the Recapitulation of traditional sonata-allegro form, Theme A is presented in the same key area of E minor, yet this time the motivic cells are distributed between the cello and right hand piano lines to create a new texture. The presentation is not exact; new staccato sixteenth notes are introduced in the piano right hand while the cello plays a variation-like passage (new rhythmic material combined melodic contour of Theme D). This mixing of elements and subtle variation demonstrates her skill of motivic development, giving the work a sense of having made a journey while still retaining the feeling of Recapitulation. Coulthard demonstrates her compliance with traditional sonata-allegro form in terms of harmonic structure in the Recapitulation; while Theme B begins in C Major, she returns to the tonic key of E minor (by altering the modulation to G sharp minor within Theme B), resulting in Theme C and D also being exactly presented in the tonic key. The movement has demonstrated excellent craft through the tightly integrated motivic development, balanced proportion of sections, and a comprehensible harmonic structure, making it cogent and dramatic.

The second movement *Sarabande*, presents an intriguing mix of antiquated and modern idioms. Although there are clear imitations of many motivic and rhythmic aspects of the Baroque dance form, the movement is constructed in a traditional form of modified rounded binary (whereas the Baroque form is AABB) with two main theme areas (and perhaps arguably a third). The cello presents Theme A (*figure 11.5*), consisting of two principal motivic cells: cell

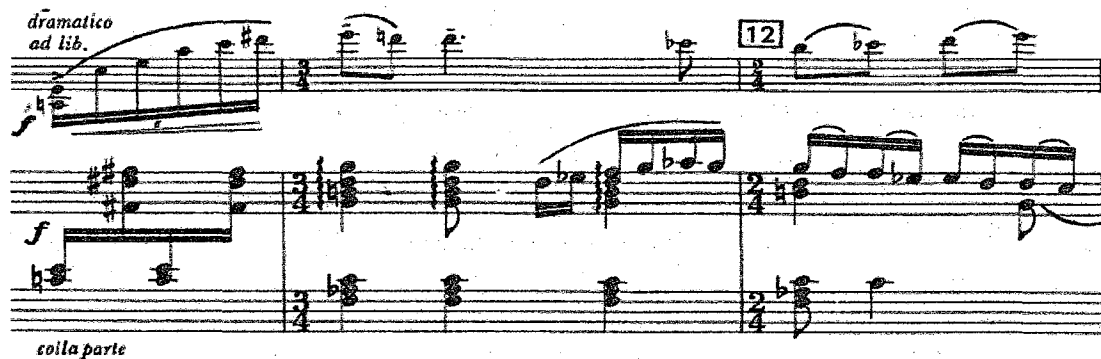
(a) is characterized by even sixteenth notes in a quasi ‘upper-neighbor’ ornamental figure, while cell (b) is more linear that incorporates syncopation and a rhythmic ornamental flourish. The motivic cells are inverted in the second statement of theme A, (a') and (b'). Through the use of ornamentally-designed motivic ideas, Coulthard is able to pay homage to the Baroque style while infusing it with a twentieth century harmonic language. Other areas of compositional craft aid in strengthening the distinctive *Sarabande* characteristic of the second beat inflection: the placement of thicker, more harmonically complex chords; double stops in the cello part; rolled chords in the piano part; and rhythmic propulsion (either by a static first beat that wants to fall into the second, or by an ornamental double-dotted figure).

Figure 11.5:



The contrasting middle section (Theme B, figure 11.6), marked by a *dramatico ad lib.* flourish in the cello part, breaks away from the *Sarabande* dance meter with a thicker fluid rhythmic and harmonic language, meter changes, and more linear motives. The distinctive motive of Theme B is the sighing motive (c) first presented in the piano part (sixteenth note chains of two-note appoggiaturas). Tension accumulates through the piling of motive (c) descending and ascending and a repeated dotted eighth figure (similar to the (b) cell of the first movement).

Figure 11.6:



Coulthard unites elements of the 'dance' section with the 'lyrical' section towards the climax of the movement as the cello brings back the *Sarabande* rhythm in double stops while the piano plays insistent sixteenth notes and arpeggio flourishes- since this material and texture has not been heard before in the movement, it could be categorized as Theme C or simply the development of the middle section.

The return of Theme A is not a direct repetition of the first section but more of a variation; the cello begins alone in *espressivo e molto rubato*, the material is mixed up and fragmented over a new piano accompanimental figure of *dolce* sextuplet arpeggios in contrary motion. The introduction of this new accompanimental texture infuses the section with a more romantic feeling, essentially showing remnants of the journey through the more dramatic middle section. This movement is eloquently crafted to give an antiquated idiom new life within a neo-romantic style.

The third movement is brief and seems to leave the work slightly imbalanced. Its form is a less conventional sonata-allegro form due to the brevity of the sections, the order of the theme groups, and their similarity in character. The range of emotion and variety is extremely narrow- perhaps if Coulthard had added one or two more contrasting sections in rondo form, the

movement would have been more satisfying both in motivic content and proportionate weight. The craft of motivic development is less successful in this movement due to the remarkable brevity of the theme areas and the lack of development or influence that the motivic cells have on the remainder of the movement. The result is a few well-defined rhythmic profiles that wander through different contours and articulations without truly having a direction, whereas the previous two movements were exceptional in their range of development. The prominent motive of the movement is found in the Exposition's Theme A (measures 1-7 of *figure 11.7*); a small three-note motivic cell (*a*) in slurred eighth-notes (major third down then perfect fourth up). This is followed by motive (*b*) of step-wise quarter and eighth-note rhythmic cell groups that connects again to motivic cell (*a*). The concentration of motives is amplified through the piano part also exchanging motives (*a*) and (*b*) over rising arpeggios in constant eighth notes. Theme A in general is moving up in register, while Theme B (beginning measure 8 of *figure 7*) suddenly contrasts in quick descending three-note motives in sixteenth notes thrown between the cello and piano.

Theme C (measure 16) returns to elements of Theme A, but cell (*a*) is now the accompaniment ostinato figure in the piano part while the cello (maintaining the same two rhythmic figures) plays a new theme with some double stops. Notice that Coulthard has only ventured sixteen measures before cell (*a*) is manipulated. In a way, this mirrors the development of motivic cells in the first movement, where elements of Theme A became part of Theme C, except in this case the breadth of potential development is significantly narrower due to the size and quality of the three-note cell. Still within the Exposition, the first section returns in variant form as A¹, but many elements remain the same: the frequent use of motivic cell (*a*), the rhythmic content of cells (*a*) and (*b*), the arpeggiated left hand piano part, the same number of

measures, and the order of material which leads directly into Theme B (that is repeated with a slight variant in contour)

Figure 11.7:

The musical score consists of two systems. The first system is for a cello and piano. The tempo is marked 'Allegro' with a quarter note equal to approximately 104 beats per minute. The cello part is marked 'p ritmico' and the piano part is marked 'Allegro'. The second system continues the piano part with markings 'molto cresc.' and 'risoluto'. A measure number '17' is indicated in a box above the first system.

With the sections being so brief and the delineations in theme areas minimal, new material dominates the Development section. The section is defined by a new texture (with new types of articulation such as *ricochet* and *spiccato* in the cello part and *staccato* in the piano), new material (such as virtuosic sixteenth note passages in the cello), and the expansion of range. Cells (a) and (b) appear more as interruptions between new material that includes, perhaps to give some interest to the section since there was little developmental potential for the limited material of the three-note cell.

The structure of the final section is unusual in its absence of a Recapitulation of the original material of the Exposition; instead, a Coda section immediately follows the Development section. Moreover, it is very short, (only eighteen measures long) and the motivic and rhythmic elements are jumbled and fragmented beyond recognition. Remarkably, motivic cell (a), the cell that was repeated too many times to count in previous sections, does not appear at all in its distinguishable intervallic content. What remains are brief quotes or hints in close succession of Themes A, B, and C, culminating in the final unification of the cello and piano through the final terse chords. Perhaps Coulthard felt that the motivic and rhythmic material had been deconstructed to such a level in the Development section that a 'chemical reaction' had occurred- returning the material to the original form was impossible.

Coulthard's originality was controversial: her biographer, David Duke, found her musical voice distinctively 'Coulthardian' in her harmonic language. Many of her colleagues, however, regarded her as a conservative when other more modern styles were predominant in Canadian composition. While undeniably influenced by Debussy and Ravel, her harmonic language is uniquely her own; she writes in a form of polytonality that superimposes and juxtaposes major and minor chords, moving abruptly between key areas without the preparation of voice leading. For example, in the first movement of *Sonata for Cello and Piano*, the three lines (the cello, the piano right hand, and the piano left hand) are frequently each playing in separate key area, but the resulting sonority is a lush harmony of extended consonance and parallel harmony (much like an extension of Debussy). An underlying tonicity is achieved through her precise choice of which chords to superimpose and use of the tonicizing pitches within that key, demonstrated within the first three measure of the opening (see *figure 11.1*): the left hand bass is fully anchoring an E minor triad while the right hand is superposing an F sharp major chord that acts

as extended figures of E minor (9, 11, and 13), meanwhile the collection of cello pitches are in B minor (accentuated by the prevalence of A sharps) but emphasize its fourth degree of E to further tonicize the E minor overall key center. In the second movement (*Sarabande*), although there are not as many key area changes as in the previous movement and the polytonic key relationships are simpler due to the solo cello-piano accompaniment texture, her harmonic language remains complexly rich with the use of polytonal accompanimental chords under a modal melody that evokes middle-eastern qualities with frequent use of augmented seconds. However, her critics are correct in pointing out her reliance on traditional forms and late romantic rhetoric, as witnessed in the use of Sonata-Allegro form, Ternary form, and Rondo form for the three movements respectfully, as well as in the more straightforward and idiomatic harmonic language of the third movement.

The other aspect of Coulthard's style is the strong adherence to traditional forms and influence from the Romantic and French Modernist harmonic styles. Therefore, *Sonata for Cello and Piano* follows the criteria of strongly representing an established style, albeit the date of composition (1947) might be misleading in terms of which context of the style it represents. The late 1940s was a time of great change in compositional style in Canada, led by composers such as John Weinzwieg, Barbara Pentland, and Jean Papineau-Couture- composers who were interested in *avant garde* techniques. Coulthard was considered a conservative composer, outside the circle of the pioneering group of composers that later became the Canadian League of Composers. Although the *Sonata for Cello and Piano* is one of her earlier works, Coulthard's style remained the same throughout her career. By sticking to her own voice and not changing according to the latest trend of composition in Canada and elsewhere, she rode the tides of radical stylistic changes throughout the twentieth century until those tides subsided into the post-

modern era. Her music that at one time was deemed conservative and not relevant to the Canadian compositional scene, emerged decades later as forward-looking to post-modernism. The work is in the neo-romantic or French-modernist style (as an extension of early Schoenberg or Debussy) written several decades after these styles were prevalent, while the outcome of her unique harmonic voice was forward-looking to the post-modernism of decades later (in its tonal orientation, return to romanticism, and mixing of influences). From the present observation of looking back at a century that just passed, the decision might be best made through listening to the work, as it clearly evokes the styles of the past.

Therefore, the strong representation an established style relies heavily on the harmonic language and overall style the work *sounds* closest to. Many elements of the Sonata are influenced from the past, such as the application of traditional form and harmonic structure. Although a harmonic analysis will reveal the use of up to three keys at once, the gravitational pull of tonality is what ultimately emerges to the listener. For example, the first and last movements sound like they are written in E minor due to the frequent use of E as the bass note (notably at the beginning and ends of each movement), and the second movement's modal melody is centered around E. Also of note is the predominant use of minor key areas (or Dorian mode that is closely-related in the order of whole and half steps) in all three movements to contribute to the emotional effect of the theme areas, whether they are the lyrical (Themes A, C, and D of the first movement, Theme B from the second movement) or mysterious (Themes A of the second movement) or mischievous (all themes of the third movement). The use of major key areas is used sparingly for large sections (only Theme B of the first movement is clearly major), but major chords superimposed on minor sonorities is a prevalent trait of Coulthard's writing. Therefore, her unique harmonic language in this sonata is more the result of coloring

the predominantly minor key areas with raised scale degrees, added scale degrees, or full major chords. This is the reason why the work better represents the apex of a style such as French-Moderism or neo-romanticism, as the foundation of tonality is an underlying force in the harmonic language.

Beauty is a primary feature of Coulthard's *Sonata for Cello and Piano*, observed in the style of the harmonic language that is widely accepted by the public as well as in the partnership of the instruments through excellent idiomatic writing. She effectively communicates the two polar aesthetics (peaceful versus brooding) through the exploitation of these qualities. This makes the sonata a decidedly beautiful piece that demonstrates several qualities to strengthen the argument for its inclusion in cello repertoire based on the criteria of beauty. The melodic content is coherent and interesting, as we had observed in the analysis of craft in motivic development. The romantic idiom in which it is written is a style that lends itself to the cello, as some of the most celebrated cello works were written in the Romantic era: The Sonata definitely stays within the comfort of representing the neo-romantic style at its apex. The 'Coulthardian' harmonic language is neither too predictable nor too extended beyond traditional harmonies. The interplay of consonance and dissonance still plays an important role in the emotional tension of the work, therefore its originality is less significant. Yet, the harmonic language is definitely twentieth century in its polytonality and use of modes, even though by 1947 this brand of harmonic language was considered conservative. If the parameters for what is considered beautiful does not include atonality (due to its lack of relationship between consonance and dissonance), but must include elements of the familiar (tonality, musical syntax) as well as humanistic qualities (evoking emotion or imagery), then Coulthard's *Sonata for Cello and Piano* provides the perfect balance within these parameters.

The public acceptance of Jean Coulthard's *Sonata for Cello and Piano* is demonstrated on many levels. Out of the three works studied in this thesis, Jean Coulthard's *Sonata for Cello and Piano* is the only work available for purchase on a commercial compact disc (released by Columbia records and CBC records), and the only work published by an international publishing firm (Novello in 1968). The work has also attracted attention from the music community- the *Sonata* was one of her first works to receive an award. Attention on the life and work of Jean Coulthard from academic community has also been pronounced through her biographer David Duke (resulting in several articles and a book), as well as a DMA dissertation on her *Sonata for Cello and Piano* by Christine Crookall. The work has also been mentioned in the *Cambridge Companion for the Cello*, one of only two Canadian works mentioned in the article (the other is S.C. Eckhardt-Gramatté's *Duo Concertante*).

The sonata is very accessible to the cellist in its difficulty level and idiomatic writing, its harmonic language, and its potential success on a recital program. The overall difficulty level would be intermediate to advanced, as the range stays mostly within the first eight positions of the instrument with the exception of a few high linear passages, the range of the double stops are within the first four positions, there are few virtuosic fast passages, and the intervallic content is not overly disjointed. The extent of advanced bow techniques includes the use of *spiccato* (crisply bouncing bow) and *ricochet* (thrown bow that bounces in the same direction). The idiomatic writing showcases the change in timbre from the low to high notes of the cello in a single sweeping phrase, and provides many opportunities for romantic shifts and *rubato*. The harmonic language is accessible while the dissonant leaps within a melody correspond with the emotional tension of the phrase, allowing for more artistic freedom in how these shifts can be approached. Coulthard's *Sonata for Cello and Piano* would fit easily into a variety of recital

programs being that it is only fifteen minutes long and would be a compelling replacement for the Rachmaninoff Sonata or Barber Sonata.

Sonata for Cello and Piano by Jean Coulthard is well-positioned within the choice of Canadian repertoire to hopefully join standard cello repertoire and finally escape the borders of Canada. The work is a great representative of a neo-romantic or even French-modernist cello sonata (as it would pair nicely with the Barber Sonata or the Debussy Sonata). It is elegantly crafted in its compelling motivic development within a more traditional structure, while its original harmonic language evokes beauty. The Sonata is one of the most beautiful Canadian works I have heard, therefore I am happy to champion it for more analytical reasons beyond my personal preference. Easily accessible to the cellist, Jean Coulthard's *Sonata for Cello and Piano* is sure to gain more and more public acceptance as it is programmed more.

Chapter 12:

Sophie-Carmen Eckhardt-Gramatté and *Duo Concertante*

About the composer

Sonia Eckhardt-Gramatté (b. Moscow 1899, naturalized Canadian 1958, died Stuttgart 1974) was a violinist, pianist, composer and teacher. She became a Canadian citizen later in life, but her impact on both the artistic and philanthropic aspects of Canadian music are still felt. There are foundations, art galleries, and music competitions in her name just to name a few. She lived a nomadic and unconventional life. Her mother studied piano with Nicholas Rubinstein and was a music instructor for the Tolstoy household. Sonia's musical training began in 1906 on the piano, taught by her mother, and her interest in composition demonstrated itself in character pieces written between 1905-9 (that were later named and collected in 1980 by Lorne Watson as *Pieces from My Childhood*). Sonia was admitted to the Paris Conservatory at age 8 for piano and violin (although she had never had any regular lessons on violin), and was performing concerts of advanced repertoire on both by age 11 in Paris, Geneva and Berlin. She moved to Berlin with her mother and sister in 1914, performing in cafés to support the family. Joseph Joachim's daughter-in-law presented Sonia with one of Joachim's violins and arranged a scholarship through a patron for her study with Bronislav Huberman. The following six years in Berlin, she performed frequently, but was becoming more interested in composition (to the disapproval of her patron).

At age 21 in 1920 she married German Expressionist painter Walter Gramatté, and devoted herself to composition and performance, becoming a sought-after virtuoso performer on

both violin and piano. While living in Spain from 1924-26, she found a new mentor in Pablo Casals who inspired her to compose more- *Concerto for Solo Violin* is a principle work from this time. The Gramattés returned to Berlin in 1926, and news soon travelled of both her compositions and virtuosity that brought her engagements to perform her works with the Philadelphia Orchestra under Leopold Stokowski and the Chicago Symphony Orchestra under Frederick Stock. The untimely death of Walter Gramatté in 1929 postponed her engagements, but she fulfilled these engagements later that year in the 1929-30 season, performing her own works for piano or violin and orchestra. Despite favorable reviews of her three talents, she shortly thereafter abandoned her performance career and devoted herself to composition.

Eckhardt-Gramatté met Austrian art historian Ferdinand Eckhardt who was studying her late husband's work in Berlin, and they were married in 1934. It was only in 1936 where she sought out formal training in composition with Max Trapp at the Preussische Akademie, otherwise her compositional style was based on her own musical intuition. The couple moved to Vienna in 1939, where Eckhardt-Gramatté began receiving prestigious commissions and recognition for her work. In 1945, she helped re-establish the Austrian branch of the ISCM. Eckhardt-Gramatté won several major composition competitions in 1948, 1949, and 1950, and first prize in the International Competition for Women Composers (GEDOK, Mannheim) in 1961.

In 1953, the Eckhardts immigrated to Canada when Ferdinand was appointed the new director of the Winnipeg Art Gallery. Being an international musician transplanted to the isolated city of Winnipeg presented many challenges; it was only in 1955 that she performed her first recital in Canada for the CBC radio series "Distinguished Artists." She soon made her mark

on the Winnipeg scene, giving recitals, hosting evenings of music at the Eckhardt home, teaching, and composing numerous commissioned works. Over the last twenty years of her life spent in Winnipeg, she was highly influential as a pedagogue and composer. She was awarded an Honorary Doctorate in Music from Brandon University and given the title “professor” from the Minister of Education of the Austrian government, both in 1970. In 1974 she became the first Canadian composer awarded the Diplôme d’honneur by the Canadian Conference of the Arts.

Shortly before her death in 1974, she started a competition in Brandon, Manitoba to encourage emerging young musicians to perform and promote Canadian works. Renamed the Eckhardt-Gramatté competition, it rotates each year between piano, strings and voice, with the winner receiving \$5,000 and a concert tour. A new Canadian work is commissioned each year for the “test piece” round of the competition. Her husband Ferdinand Eckhardt furthered the arts in Canada by elevating the Winnipeg Art Gallery to one of the top galleries in the country. He also championed Sonia’s life and work through collecting and publishing a catalogue of her works in 1980, formed the Eckhardt-Gramatté Foundation in 1981 to provide financial assistance for the performance of her works, and wrote her biography entitled *Music From Within* in 1985. Also through the foundation, he sponsored recordings, publications, exhibitions, concert series, music commissions, and scholarships. Some of the organizations that continue to be funded today include The Winnipeg Art Gallery, The Winnipeg and Calgary Symphonies, and the Universities of Brandon, of Manitoba and of Calgary. Volume 21 of RCI’s *Anthology of Canadian Music* of 1985 is devoted to her works.

Sonia Eckhardt-Gramatté composed throughout her life, beginning at age 6. Her styles and influences are many- her first works are in the Parisian salon style, followed by virtuoso repertoire written for her own performing on violin and piano in the 1920's. Because of her love of Bach, counterpoint is prevalent in many of her works. The 1930's saw fewer compositions, due partly to the death of her first husband and to her decision to write more for orchestra. Her individual style became more apparent in the 1940's: neo-classicism, imaginative treatment of counterpoint and rhythm, use of bi-tonality, and jazz influences. Yet, her dense, aggressive style is said to be more dependent on late romanticism than on twentieth-century techniques; "her use of dissonance was a logical development from post-Wagnerianism, although it never reached the emotional atonality of the Viennese masters (Schoenberg, Berg, and Webern)."⁸ The 1950's show further experimentation with new genres: serialism, metric procedures after Messaien, and concern for intervallic structure after Bartók (especially the interval of a fourth). Being a woman composer in a competitive and precedent-laden Europe presented many obstacles that her tenacious personality overcame. This is in stark contrast to the frontier-like situation of composition in Canada that benefitted greatly from her musical presence and philanthropy.

Eckhardt-Gramatté's *Duo Concertante*.

Duo Concertante, although not one of the most recognizable Canadian works, is still identified as a principle example of a Canadian work for instrumental duo. It was commissioned in 1959 for the Saskatchewan Jubilee, premiered by two Manitoban musicians who had become strong supporters, cellist Peggy Sampson and pianist Lorne Watson. It is of sonata dimensions, but also embodies concerto principles of display-dialogue and technical virtuosity. *Duo*

⁸ The Eckhardt-Gramatté Foundation, "Biography of S.C. Eckhardt-Gramatté", Canadian Music Center website.

Concertante strongly represents an established style- the cultivated showcase genre that was prevalent in the 1950's. The work also represents the prevalent style of neo-classicism in its use of a three movement fast-slow-fast form and thematic development of the motives, yet there is a romantic flair because of its virtuosity and harmonic language. Twentieth century influences include both post-romantic and expressionist atonality, where the intervallic content of the pitches are more important than their relationship to the tonic of the key. Original qualities include her unique integration of many influences such as serialism, non-traditional harmonic language, complex counterpoint, rhythmic complexity, and some jazz influences. Motivic development can be seen through her affinity for the intervals of perfect 4ths and Major 7ths, articulated through unique harmonic language that relies heavily on octatonic, whole tone, and blues scales. Therefore, the criteria for judgment that are most influential in this work are craft of motivic interest and development, originality, strongly representing an established style, and accessibility to the cellist. Other criteria that are less prominent include traditional beauty and public acceptance.

The criteria of excellent craft through motivic development and structure can be observed through her use of motivic fragments and use of salient intervals within a Post-Romantic or Expressionist harmonic language. Her style is motivically dense, with frequent exchange or piling of motives between the cello and piano parts, reminiscent of Berg's Post-Romantic style. Most measures of the piece contain some fragment of a motive that expand (through repetition or pattern) and develop the original presentations (not always keeping to exact intervallic quotes or pitches). Reflecting her search to extend Post-Romantic ideals of tonal exploration is her frequent use of whole tone, octatonic, and blues scales.

The joyous and youthful character of the first movement, marked *Giocoso, molto ritmico*, is achieved through leaping intervals in galloping compound meter. The principal motives are only two to three measures long, presented in close succession, and are concisely found on the first few systems of the score. The interval of a 7th rules the opening motive in the piano as well as the opening cello motive; the piano presents the interval of a major 7th both vertically and horizontally, then the cello outlines a less dissonant minor 7th interval (first in the ‘joking’ motive (a) in m.3, then fills in the interval in the scale motive (b)), and finally reiterates the piano’s opening pitches in the galloping motive (c) of m.9. (see *figure 12.1*). Although the prevalent intervals are dissonant, Eckhardt-Gramatté constructs centers of pitch or frequently reiterated pitches to give some stability to the dissonance. This prominence of the interval of the major and minor 7th in the opening motives sets the stage for the development of motives throughout the work as well as gives a clear context of her unique harmonic language. In addition to the outlining of the minor 7th, the ascending scale motive (b) that is first presented in Lydian mode, also appears as an octatonic scale. This scale gesture is usually followed by a repeated pitch, although this motive is often fragmented throughout the movement. A fourth motive (d) is found within the first 12 measures, first hidden in the piano’s L.H. in m. 10, that breaks rhythmically from the constant sixteenth rhythm as well as being distinctive in contour and use widely leaping intervals. Prevalent in the movement is the use of the perfect 4th, most notably in the piano part in the form of double parallel fourths or the piling of ascending fourths.

Figure 12.1:

Giocoso, molto ritmico

The musical score is for Violoncello and Piano. It is marked *Giocoso, molto ritmico*. The key signature has one sharp (F#). The time signature is 16th notes. The score is divided into four systems. The first system shows the Violoncello and Piano parts. The Piano part has a forte (*f*) dynamic and a sforzando (*sf*) marking. The Violoncello part has a forte (*f*) dynamic. The second system shows the Violoncello and Piano parts. The Piano part has a piano (*p*) dynamic and a crescendo (*cresc.*) marking. The Violoncello part has a piano (*p*) dynamic. The third system shows the Violoncello and Piano parts. The Piano part has a forte (*f*) dynamic and a piano (*p*) dynamic. The Violoncello part has a forte (*f*) dynamic. The fourth system shows the Violoncello and Piano parts. The Piano part has a forte (*f*) dynamic and a mezzo-forte (*mf*) dynamic. The Violoncello part has a forte (*f*) dynamic.

The contrasting B section is marked *meno mosso* and quickly transitions to smooth chromatic gestures in both parts. When larger intervals are used to increase the drama, the prominent intervals change from the bright major 7ths and open perfect 4ths used in the A section to the more somber minor 7ths and ambiguous tritones; intervals found between notes of the blues scale. The transition back to the A section is achieved through the return of rhythmic vitality and

accelerando, using principally the scalar motive. The return is not an exact repetition; many of the original motives are augmented rhythmically or the motives are rearranged. The coda section resembles another triumphant return of the A section, but varying the piling and fragmenting of the motives. Again the motives are slightly altered in keeping with the playful mood, sweeping through to the end of the movement.

The second movement, inspired by a mobile by Calder, is written without bar-lines to represent an ethereal 'suspended-in-time' feeling. The use of wide intervals (again we can note her preference for the interval of a fourth and octatonic scales) paint the imagery of the suspended mobile, especially in her treatment of timbre with the piano part in the upper register while the cello plays a low melancholic melody. Furthermore, the careful use of intervals in the piano part helps to recreate the sound of a gong (a single or octave low pitch over held pedal), a harp (playing staccato octaves over a held pedal) and a celeste (quasi-parallel chords of six pitches, built primarily of major sevenths filled in by perfect fourths and tritones in the upper register of the piano, over held pedal). Very rarely do the cello and piano move at the same time in the first section; the hesitant and vague mood created depends heavily on this texture (see *figure 12.2*). The craft of motivic content and texture are again highlighted in the contrasting B section where the voices begin to move together with more forward motion. Instances of parallel movement therefore are more poignant in their contrast with the A section, reserved for emotional proclamations that build to the climaxes of the middle section. Small unwinding cadenza figures consisting of trills, fourths, tritones, and major sevenths, presented alternatively by the cello and piano, deflate the extreme outbursts of emotions of the middle section to transition back to the A section. The extended sonorities and yearning of the intervals shows influence of Schoenberg's early post-romantic style while the A section harkens expressionist

style of asymmetrical melodies. The A section motive in the cello return is almost imperceptive, and this time the theme is unaltered.

Figure 12.2:

Cantabile e semplice
Very quite tempo. [Play D, Count 2 F on each D]

When Harp sounds mixed,
dots over notes mean
every note is separated
from each other while using
Pedal area

loco

clear like harp
effects
Ped.

cresc.

f

Ped. *

Si.

* SC Ped will be used on all p. pp. bpp. places together with the right Ped.

The third movement, marked *Vivo e molto preciso*, is the most virtuosic movement. The opening statement declaims not only the prominent motive and rhythmic cell, it also tersely presents the principle six notes that permeate the movement. These six notes [C-F-B-E flat-A flat-D] are found both vertically in the first piano chord, built as piled diminished, perfect, and augmented fourths, and horizontally in the cello motive [A flat-E flat-D] with a small turn

embellishment. Notice the choice to highlight the perfect fourth and the major seventh. Keeping with the atonal genre, this motive is treated as a cell that can be identified only by its intervallic content instead of a particular pitch on which it begins or is centered around. (see figure 12.3)

Figure 12.3:

Bar $\left(\begin{array}{c} 15 \\ 8 \end{array} - \begin{array}{c} 12 \\ 8 \end{array} - \begin{array}{c} 8 \\ 8 \end{array} \right)$

rows: $\left\{ \begin{array}{c} 5 \\ 8 \end{array} - \begin{array}{c} 6 \\ 8 \end{array} - \begin{array}{c} 7 \\ 8 \end{array} \right\}$

$\left\{ \begin{array}{c} 3 \\ 8 \end{array} - \begin{array}{c} 6 \\ 8 \end{array} - \begin{array}{c} 5 \\ 8 \end{array} \right\}$

Vivo e molto preciso,

III.

The motivic development is most remarkable in this last movement through the form of a quasi-rondo, A-B-C-D-A-B-A. A traditional rondo form would have the A section return between every new theme, but perhaps this might have made the movement too predictable, not to mention very long. The A section motive is angular and rhythmic, showcasing the intervals of major 7ths and perfect 4ths. The B section has jazzy undertones and is more suave than angular, yet the pitches of D-A flat- E flat are still present, played staccato in the L.H. of the piano. (see figure 12.4) Parallel tritones are also featured in a jazzy *glissando* cello passage that serves as the climax of the section, followed by the unwinding staccato figures of the piano that sneaks in quotes of the opening pitches [C-F-C-B].

Figure 12.4:

The image displays two systems of musical notation for piano and cello. The first system, measures 23-27, features a piano part with complex rhythmic patterns and a cello part with a 'soft swinging beat'. Dynamic markings include *sf*, *mf*, and *F#*. The second system, measures 28-32, is marked 'Bridge' and includes a 'Ped' (pedal) instruction. The tempo marking 'Moderato assai' is present.

The C section, marked *Moderato assai*, is very contrasting in both mood and intervallic contour and profile. The cello and piano exchange solo improvisational style passages that feature chromatic intervals as well as perfect fourths, recalling of the middle section of the second movement. The D section is suddenly driving and virtuosic, presented in a moto-perpetuo fashion of constant sixteenths, again featuring the intervals of a perfect fourth and major 7th. The remainder of the movement serves to recap the previous sections, thus giving weight to the conclusion of the work and reiterating the original form of the motivic cell. The return of the A section is announced with the opening motive (with an interesting twist in the cello part with the substitution of the A flat with the brighter A natural, only to return to its original state in the next measure). This is followed by an altered B section, and finally the A section motive returns like a memory in *flautando*, only to be trumpeted by a quote one semitone raised. She takes every

opportunity to infuse the motivic elements of the piece into these last measures: the cello swoops down in an octatonic scale, the piano and cello present the jazzy staccato figures that outline a major 7th through a perfect fourth and tritone, and drives to the dramatic C Major (with added jazz inflections of F sharp and E flat) concluding chord. (see figure 12.5).

Figure 12.5:



Duo Concertante better fits the criteria of strongly representing the instrumental show-case style, but I also find her music intriguing and original in its voice. If her style mirrored another great composer's work, then there would be almost no validity in championing this particular composition. Perhaps it is because Eckhardt-Gramatté derives her compositions style from various influences, and the particular combination of these elements creates her individual

voice. Since she was primarily self-taught, the strengths of her compositions are driven by the performance element, making her works (particularly for strings and piano) wonderful show pieces. Her skill involves showcasing the instruments through defined moods that feature timbre, exploration of range, and well-defined characters through rhythmic emphasis and articulation. In *Duo Concertante*, one way in which she achieves this originality is her use of rhythmic language in each movement. In the first movement, marked *Giocosso, molto ritmico*, Eckhardt-Gramatté achieves the “playful” character through compound meter shifts, achieving a somewhat steady rhythmic pulse that is neither relentless nor repetitive. Downward and upward facing arrows are marked throughout the score, indicating where the beginnings and ends of group of notes should create one complex of notes. The second movement, marked *Cantabile e semplice*, is a stark contrast to the first movement’s jubilant and rhythmic character. The style is pointillistic, meaning that pitches seem isolated and tempo is suspended. The influence of Bartok can be heard here, much like in the slow movement of his work *Music for Stings, Percussion and Celeste*. Although the time signature is 7/8, the movement has no bar-lines and the only indications of groupings are small checks every seven beats in the score. This does not mean that we will feel a pulse on the first of each grouping, nor does it mean that a phrase will start on a particular beat; instead, the contour of the motive dictates the syntax of the phrase. How the voices interact is meticulously calculated, as the cello and piano parts seldom move together in the A section. In the third movement, Eckhardt-Gramatté incorporates abstract metrical patterns: She describes the meter as being patterned like a serial row (see *figure 12.3*). However, her usage is complex; the complete row is never used and many sections do not use the metric pattern to which she refers. Her intention is clearly novel and experimental, though the

results are hard to evaluate. The eighth note pulse remains constant, and the changing meter helps the performers to find the downbeat pulses of each motive.

A more fitting criteria for judgment would be strongly representing an established style; in this case, representing the genre of the twentieth century concert or showcase piece. Following in the predominant neoclassic style of Canadian composers in the 1950s, *Duo Concertante* also rises as an important work of this decade. Because her compositional style is derived more from musical instinct assimilated through decades of performing concert violin and piano repertoire than it is derived from formal compositional training, her musical language emerges more as a whimsical extension of 'the greats' from previous centuries as opposed to falling into one school of compositional process. The result is an eclectic style that incorporates neo-classic form with an extended post-romantic or Expressionistic harmonic language. Combine this unique flair for motivic development and harmonic language with great idiomatic writing for the instrument and the crowd-pleasing quality of its gestures and characters, a twentieth century showpiece emerges. The salient featured style of 'showpiece' gives weight to the argument that *Duo Concertante* deserves a place in standard cello repertoire.

The qualities that satisfy the judgment criteria of beauty include elements of the harmonic language, the use of imagery, and the idiomatic writing for the cello. Although the work would be considered atonal, and therefore presents difficulties with the traditionally tonal view of musical beauty, Eckhardt-Gramatté's romantic flair and preference for centralizing pitches adds to the work's beauty. The harmonic language is described as an extension of post-romantic harmonic practices as opposed to the purely atonal style where all twelve pitches are treated with equal weight. This is seen through her use of quartal harmonies, parallel motion, use of modal,

octatonic, and blues scales, and the frequent tonicizing of pitches. Although the prominent use of the intervallic cells (in this case of fourths and sevenths) discussed earlier is salient feature of atonal music, she does not move these cells freely amongst all twelve pitch classes. Instead, they serve as distinctive intervallic pitches within a motive, and are surrounded by more melodically-based material (such as scale passages, repeated pitches, or other motives of narrow contour). Furthermore, the pitches of the musical phrases connect to each other and give syntactical meaning within the phrase, thus conforming more naturally to the listener's pre-existing understanding of "language of music." An example of this would be the frequently repeated pitch of A that is presented clearly in the opening measures of the piece, serving as a gravitational force for the major 7ths. (see *figure 12.1*). Another characteristic of her style is constructing a phrase in several small motives that each have their own key centers, quickly moving from one key center to another approximately every measure or two. The result is a work that is distinctly twentieth century in musical language, but possesses enough borrowing of familiar elements to hopefully elicit an emotional reaction from the audience.

Of special mention when considering the criteria of beauty is the second movement's beautiful imagery of the mobile. The result is a convincing musical depiction of the 'suspension of time' in the first section (where there are no bar-lines and the voices move independently), heightened by timbral representation of the gong, harp and celeste. When the voices begin to move together in the middle section, the building to the climax is strengthened by a prolonged consonant passage. The idiomatic writing for the cello in this movement demonstrates the melancholic, lyrical, and dramatic qualities of the instrument in both the low and high registers.

Through observing the idiomatic writing for the cello, it is obvious that Eckhardt-Gramatté was a highly skilled violinist and pianist, as the work is very accessible for the cellist. The overall level of the work would be moderately advanced (compared to large-scale twentieth century works for cello and piano), with a few awkward fast passages that don't follow idiomatic scalar finger patterns (although this would be a common complaint of twentieth century cello parts that are more atonal), and a few challenging forays into unprepared high registers. There are instances where her indicated bowings are violinistic, such as up bow chords and accents where cellists would use down bows. Much care is taken with articulation markings in both the cello and piano parts. The cello and piano are each successfully featured in this concert piece, each given virtuosic passages and solo opportunities, as well as dramatic ensemble passages. The work contains all of the salient features of the concert piece genre: the strongly-defined characters (particularly triumphant or playful in mood), the flamboyant and virtuosic fast passages, bold chords and double-stops, enticing motives, flourishing cadenzas, and dramatic finales.

The public acceptance of this work is average for a Canadian work. Upon hearing the work, Pablo Casals wrote Eckhardt-Gramatté saying, "your composition for violoncello and piano seems to me a natural product of your increasing fantasy and extraordinary talent."⁹ There are two archival recordings of the work available from the CMC library or on-line through the newly-launched CentreStreams, one by Peggy Sampson and Lorne Watson, and one by Walter Joachim and John Newmark. Interestingly, the score has not been published, but is available through the CMC. The work is also spoken about in the Cambridge Companion for the Cello as an important work by a Canadian composer (the only other Canadian work mentioned

⁹ Program notes of recording by Walter Joachim and John Newmark

was Jean Coulthard's *Sonata for Cello and Piano*). It will hopefully only be a matter of time (and a matter of having cellists program the work more frequently) before the work is more widely recognized, since it possesses all of the qualities necessary for success as a twentieth century cello work.

In conclusion, Eckhardt-Gramatté's *Duo Concertante* is a work that demonstrates a myriad of twentieth century techniques and influences. These include atonality, serialism, expressionism, and octatonic scales to name a few, and show influence of Bach, Bartok, Stravinsky, Schoenberg and Berg. This work also gives us a look into her new role as a Canadian composer in the late 1950s. Despite the fact that she only immigrated to Canada in 1953, her work was in step with the new direction of Canadian composition- an area of Canadian culture that was in the midst of a revolution. *Duo Concertante* is an important work that I feel should join the cello repertoire due to its showcasing of the cello and piano partnership, and for its variety of characters and moods that makes it a crowd pleaser.

Chapter 13

André Prévost and *Sonate No.2 pour violoncelle et piano*

About the Composer

André Prévost (b. Hawkesbury, ON 1934- d. Montreal 2001) was a prolific Canadian composer and teacher. Although born in Ontario, he grew up and studied in St. Jérôme, Québec. He pursued his classical training at the Séminaire de Saint-Thérèse and the Collège de St-Laurent. In 1951 he entered the Montreal Conservatoire, studying with Isabelle Delorme, Jean Papineau-Couture, and Clermont Pépin. His First Quartet won the Sarah Fisher composition prize in 1959, his first work for orchestra *Poème de l'Infini* won the first prize for composition at the Conservatoire in 1960. In 1960, on grants awarded by the governments of Canada and Quebec, Prévost attended Messiaen's analysis class at the Paris Conservatoire. In 1961 he joined Dutilleux's composition class at the Ecole Normale de Musique. His compositions from his time in France (including *Sonate pour violoncelle et piano*) show the integration of complex formal structures. Returning to Canada in 1963, Prévost received a commission from the Montreal Symphony Orchestra for *Fantasmes*, a posthumous tribute to John F. Kennedy. The work won a composition prize from the Montreal SO and the Fondation des Amis de l'Art. Also in 1963, he won the Prix d'Europe which allowed him to study electroacoustic music (at ORTF) with Michel Philippot in 1964, and at Tanglewood in 1965 with Kodály, Copland, Schuller, and Elliot Carter. Prévost became a professor of analysis and composition at l'Université de Montréal in 1964, remaining until his retirement in 1996.

Prévost's works are well-received in Canada and abroad, particularly in the United States, Europe, India and New Zealand. Many of Prévost's compositions are inspired by world events, such as *Fantasmès* as a tribute to J.F. Kennedy, *Choréographie I* (1972) on the Olympic massacre in Munich, the Third String Quartet (1989?) on the massacre at the Ecole Polytechnique in Montreal. Other works are inspired by humanistic ideals, such as *Choréographie II (E=MC²)* (1976), *Ahimsâ* (1983), and *Cosmophonie* (1985). He wrote several test pieces for Canadian instrumental competitions, including three for the Montreal International Violin Competition (*Pyknon* (1966), an excerpt from *Hivers dans l'âme* (1981) and *Variations et theme* (1988)), and the *Sonate No. 2 pour violoncelle et piano*. His *Suite for String Quartet* was commissioned jointly by the CMC and the Centennial Commission in 1966, and premiered in 1968 in Toronto by the Orford String Quartet. His most imposing work, *Terre des Hommes* for double orchestra, three choirs, and two readers, marked the inauguration of Expo '67 in Montreal. *Cantate pour cordes* (1987) was commissioned by Sir Yehudi Menuhin (who conducted its première with Orchestre Camarata Lysy of Gstaad at the Guelph Festival in Ontario), which subsequently inspired a documentary on the work's development by Société Radio-Canada ('Menuhin-Prévost, a creative adventure') and that won a Special Mention in the Prix Italia (1990) and a Rodgers Communication Media Award (1991). By the late 1980s, Prévost had written over 50 works, many as a result of commissions from orchestras and other organizations.

Prévost is among Canada's most decorated and composers, receiving such awards as the Medal of the Canadian Music Council in 1977, the award of the Canadian Performing Rights Society in 1985, and a medal celebrating the 125th anniversary of the Canadian Federation. Prévost was made an Officer of the Order of Canada in 1986. In 1971 he became a member of

the board of directors of the Canadian Music Centre, and in 1973 president of the Groupe Nouvelle-Aire. He has eleven CD recordings (not a large amount considering his notoriety in Canadian composition) available for purchase from the Canadian Music Centre and over 70 archival recordings in their libraries, as well as several published works by Québec publisher Doberman-Yppan. Volume 28 of RCI's *Anthology of Canadian Music* in 1987 is dedicated to Prévost's works.

His style is original and fresh, often distinguishable through its rhythm and atonal motivic content (such as the use of wide intervals). His style is difficult to categorize in a school of composition, using contemporary techniques freely, including romantic lyricism, virtuoso writing for instruments, twelve-tone technique, jazz elements, and the medieval fold-back principle.¹⁰ Although he wrote several sonatas, concertos, string quartets, and other abstract genres, he composed numerous works with descriptive titles, and his formal structures were unconventional due to his idea that structure was an outcome of the work's inspiration instead of a template. Other works written for the cello include *Elegy*, *Improvisation*, and the first cello and piano sonata (1962).

Sonate No. 2 pour Violoncelle et Piano

André Prévost was commissioned to write this sonata for the Eckhardt-Gramatté competition of 1985 in Brandon, Manitoba. Many criteria for judgment lend strength to the quality of this composition, particularly in its craft of motivic development and in its original voice. The other criteria are less successful when applied to his second sonata for cello: the criteria of strongly representing an established style (due to its originality and difficulty falling

¹⁰ Proctor, 118.

into a single style category); the criteria of beauty (as works deemed beautiful are rarely atonal works); the criteria of accessibility to the cellists (since it is technically very advanced); and its acceptance by the public (as it is not frequently played). Through isolating these aspects of the work and the degree by which they shape the work, we can better appreciate its potential as a significant cello work that deserves to join the cello repertoire.

Of the three works I have introduced, Prévost's is the most exceptional in its motivic concentration. The idea of a single motivic theme or "germ" is the prevailing inspiration of the work, written as a single movement in three basic sections that recur almost in rondo form. The structural outcome of the work is therefore ruled by the development of this motivic structure- a feature of Prévost's compositional method that explains the unconventional structuring of many of his works. The following passage from the opening page of the score, written by the composer, gives some background on how the work was influenced and conceived (translated from French):

The idea for my Sonata No. 2 for violoncello and piano came to me in a spontaneous fashion. The first phrase of the work, played alone by the cello, quite unexpectedly impressed itself on me: that's why the quotation from Beethoven that "a spark stolen from the infinite" applies particularly to the genesis of this work.

However far from me, I intended to establish a connection between the greatness of the Beethovenian inspiration and my own; it's more the phenomenon itself that I am bound and that discovers in itself the presence of the musical idea that came to me freely and that contains in itself all the material of the composition. Where did the musical inspiration come from and why did it manifest itself in this precise moment and not another? It's as difficult for me to answer this question as it to feel completely responsible for the existence work itself. All I can say is, 'it is what it is', and I tried to stay true to the initial idea throughout the different 'moments' of the work.

These 'moments' are of an elegiac nature and very lyrical in the slow parts and very stridently rhythmical in the fast sections. None the less, these violent contrasts are all created organically from the same material, all belonging to the initial idea. This is again

a reflection of Beethoven, who best sums up the process in his quote: "in music, everything proceeds from the idea and everything returns to it."

Hopefully this page will affect the listener as directly and profoundly as it has astonished and pleased the composer by the singular nature and happenstance of its manifestation at the moment of creation. The act of composition has never been so gratifying and intriguing.¹¹

Although there are five principle themes, each is based on the same basic intervallic content of tritones, major sevenths, and semi-tones (chromatic movement); each is a variation of the other.

As the intervallic content of the "germ" idea is minimal, Prévost can adhere closely to these principle intervals while creating different theme profiles through exploring basic rhythmic cells, melodic contour, range and instrumental timbre, tempo, and varying textures and styles accompanimental figures. The craft is succinct by remaining within these limited boundaries.

Due to the basic nature of the materials by which the work is crafted, the material does not have too far to stretch since Prévost is determined to relate every measure to the basic idea. The

¹¹ L'idée de ma SONATE NO. 2 pour violoncelle et piano m'est venue d'une façon tout à fait spontanée. La première phrase de l'oeuvre, jouée au violoncello seul, s'est imposée à moi sans détour et sans tâtonnement: c'est pourquoi cette citation de Beethoven que "l'idée est une étincelle vole à l'infini" s'applique particulièrement à la genèse de mon oeuvre.

Loin de moi cependant, l'intention d'établir un rapprochement intempestif entre la grandeur de la pensée beethovenienne et la mienne; c'est plutôt au phénomène lui-même que je m'attache et qui consiste à découvrir à soi la présence d'une idée musicale apparemment venue 'gratuitement' et qui cela vient-il et pourquoi cela se manifeste-t-il à ce moment précis plutôt qu'à tel autre? Il m'est aussi impossible de répondre à ces questions qu'il m'est loisible de m'attribuer le moindre mérite à l'existence du fait lui-même. Tout ce que je peux dire, c'est que cela est et que j'ai tenté d'être fidèle à cette idée première tout au cours de l'élaboration des différents moments de l'ouvrage.

Ces "moments" sont d'une nature "élegiaque" et très lyrique dans les parties lentes et très affirmés rythmiquement dans les rapides. Toutefois ces contrastes violents sont constitués organiquement des mêmes éléments, ces éléments étant ceux de l'idée initiale. C'est encore une réflexion de Beethoven qui peut le mieux résumer ma pensée: "En musique, tout procède de l'idée et tout y retourne."

Puisse cette page rejoindre aussi directement et profondément l'auditeur qu'elle a étonné et ravi le compositeur par la nature singulière et insolite de sa manifestation, au moment de la création. Il est rare que l'acte de composer m'ait autant comblé et intrigué.

variety of basic motivic materials is so narrow that it is impossible to become overly obscure or complex. Furthermore, the themes are rarely presented simultaneously in juxtaposition to one another- instead, each section of the work revolves around the working-out of only one or two themes. The structure is the effect the motivic content, differentiated by tempo changes accompanied by distinctive mood changes.

We will first examine the various permutations of the “germ” idea in an overview of the sonata’s main sections. The A section, marked *Lento*, consists of three basic themes (of which two are very similar in their presentation). Note the distinction between a theme (a complete melodic phrase) and a motive or cell (a perceivable or salient succession of notes), as we will observe the unusual length of Prévost’s themes and discuss this separately. The solo cello introduction presents theme A and the basic intervallic content and distinctive cells of the entire work. The cell of [021] or its reordering of [201] is prevalent and separated by leaps of a tritone, resulting in a mood of mystery and tonal obscurity, while avoiding the affect of randomly-selected notes. When the piano chords are presented, the atonality perpetuated by the prevalence of tritones is further accentuated. (see *figure 13.1*). The piano follows with a variant theme A¹ that further explores the chromatic cell and tritone movement. The section is rounded by theme B that is characterized by double-dotted sixteenth notes and triplets, again built of tritones, semitones, and accentuating the leaps of major sevenths, presented in the virtuosic high register of the cello over piano syncopated repeated pitches. (see *figure 13.2*) In this first section, all of the intervallic and rhythmic material is presented through three themes.

Figure 13.1:

Handwritten musical score for Figure 13.1. The score is written on two systems. The first system consists of a vocal line (treble clef) and a piano accompaniment (grand staff). The vocal line begins with the instruction "CON SORD." and a dynamic marking of *pp*. It features a series of notes with slurs and a bracketed measure containing the number 5. The piano accompaniment starts with a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). It includes a triplet of eighth notes, a dynamic marking of *pp*, and a measure marked with a bracketed 10. The second system continues the vocal line with a crescendo marking "CRES. ---" and the piano accompaniment with a dynamic marking of *p* and various chords.

Figure 13.2:

Handwritten musical score for Figure 13.2. The score is written on two systems. The first system consists of a vocal line (treble clef) and a piano accompaniment (grand staff). The vocal line begins with the instruction "SENZA R." and a dynamic marking of *pp*. It features a series of notes with slurs and a bracketed measure containing the number 25. The piano accompaniment starts with a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). It includes a triplet of eighth notes, a dynamic marking of *pp*, and a measure marked with a bracketed 25. The second system continues the vocal line with a crescendo marking "CRES. ---" and the piano accompaniment with a dynamic marking of *p* and various chords.

The B section, marked *Allegro*, presents theme C in the cello part over decisive syncopated staccato chords in the piano. The idea of motivic development is featured as now elements of both themes A and B are incorporated in both the rhythmic content (dotted and triplet rhythms) and the intervallic make-up of the theme (as in the opening pitches of the piece; frequent leaps of tritones, descending major sevenths, and the motivic cell [201]). (see figure 13.3). Once the cello has finished the complete presentation of the theme, the instruments exchange roles so that the piano can remind us of the distinctive first part of theme C. This process of exchanging roles in their exact pitches (sometimes with register change) gives a further sense of cohesion and affirmation of the theme areas.

Figure 13.3:

ALLEGRO (♩ = 126)

50

The musical score consists of three systems. The first system shows the piano part with syncopated staccato chords and the cello part with a melodic line. The second system continues the piano part with syncopated staccato chords and the cello part with a melodic line. The third system shows the piano part with syncopated staccato chords and the cello part with a melodic line. The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings.

The next section A¹, marked *Lento*, closely resembles the searching mood and sparse textures of the opening section with the further development of theme B's rhythmic and motivic content in the cello part. For the first time in the work, Prévost presents two themes in counterpoint with the piano quoting theme A¹ under the cello voice. I have not assigned a new theme area to this section due to the fact that it is almost entirely crafted of small quotes or characteristics of all previous themes: quotes of the beginning of theme C (which is also very closely related to the opening pitches of theme A in contour and rhythmic presentation), use of theme A's [201] motivic cell, and application of theme B's strident double dotted rhythm. Therefore, the section attempts to draw together all of the permutations of the original "germ" idea through various techniques of exact quotation, of motivic fragmenting, and of developing an isolated element of a theme such as rhythm. An extensive cello cadenza, comprising heavily of the dotted and triplet rhythms as well as the chromatic and tritone intervals, climbs to the upper register of the cello to transition into the next *Allegro* section (and thus delineate the new material).

Section C features the driving yet jazzy piano theme in changing meter while the cello is suspended high above in long tones (mostly harmonics), although no previous motivic or thematic material is present here. Eventually the cello line becomes more involved through 'sneaking in' an elongated version of theme C that eventually morphs into a new theme D. (see *figure 13.4*) Theme D further explores the leaps of a major seventh, now mostly presented ascending rather than their first presentation of descending within theme D. Moreover, the relationship between themes C and D is further accentuated with the occasional quotes of theme C. Again, Prévost exchanges the voices to present theme D in the piano, then again in the cello.

Figure 13.4:

The image displays two systems of handwritten musical notation. Each system consists of three staves: a single staff for the vocal line and a grand staff (treble and bass clef) for the piano accompaniment. The first system is labeled with a boxed '210' at the top right, and the second system is labeled with a boxed '215' at the top right. The notation includes various musical symbols such as notes, rests, accidentals, and dynamic markings.

The arch form begins to make its descent towards the end of the work: Section B returns with an exact recalling of theme C in the cello, Section A' is presented exactly (but this time in the piano part), then transitions to the *più lento* Coda (where the work unwinds further and further in mood and surface rhythm) until the final bravura flourish of four measures in Section C material.

Through following the craft of the motivic development in Prévost's *Sonate no. 2 pour violoncelle et piano*, the notion that "everything comes from the idea and returns to it" is expertly

realized through the structuring of the various sections. Where a traditional sonata typically consists of three or four movements that each contains two or more distinctive themes, he manages to achieve variety and depth of musical journey when using such limited material as a single idea for an entire sonata. Much of the variety is achieved through the manner in which the themes are presented within the arch form of quasi-rondo structure; each subsequent section directly juxtaposes the manner in which previous section's themes were exhibited.

Furthermore, each theme area consists of long, spun-out ideas that journey through the basic elements of the "germ" idea and its permutations (that were presented in the opening section), therefore each theme shares several common attributes (such as intervallic content, melodic gesture, rhythm, tempo, or texture). The opening slow Section A consists of three long themes (Theme A is eighteen measure long, Theme A¹ is six measures long, and Theme B is nineteen measures long) that are presented clearly one after the other. While Section B directly juxtaposes the tempo and accompanimental rhythmic texture, a single theme (Theme C) takes up the entire section (twenty-seven measures long in the cello presentation and five measures long in the piano). Theme C is constructed in a small ternary form, as the distinctive first idea of the theme (that becomes a salient motive throughout the work) comes back after having built in tension and rhythmic complexity through the middle portion of the theme. The return to the original *Lento* tempo and mood in Section A¹ again directly juxtaposes the previous section, however now aspects of the three themes are fragmented and developed with no new themes being presented. After the cadenza, this densely-motivic section is again contrasted by the changing-meter Section C. This section, when combined with the following Section B, shows an extensive arch form: sixty-two measures of rhythmic interplay (neither the jazzy accompaniment nor the suspended cello line presents a clear theme), seventeen measures of Theme C in

elongation (cello), twenty measures of the new Theme D (closely related to Theme C at first, then directly quotes C for the last seven measures, in the cello), nineteen measures of exact repetition Theme D (piano), and eleven measures of Theme D (cello). Immediately following is a direct repetition of Section B which consists, as we remember, only of Theme C (twenty six measures). Therefore, the overall form of Sections C and B together gives us Intro-Theme C-Theme D-Theme D- Theme D- Theme C all within the same tempo and general character, giving substantial weight to the middle of the work. To sufficiently unravel the tension and adequately balance the work, the next two sections of the *Lento* Section A¹ (returning in exact repetition of Theme B but this time the voices are exchanged) and *Più Lento* Coda (consisting largely of repeated long notes) together span forty five measures until the final *Presto* gesture of four measures. Many exceptional qualities of craft can be concluded from the above analysis of theme length and content. First, the proportions of the sections create balance in the overall dramatic trajectory of the work. Second, the amount of variety between the sections is neither too much nor too little, achieved by: creating four distinct sections (A, A¹, B, C) within two well-defined tempos, using almost exclusively the material of the expansive four themes (all built from the ‘germ’ idea), not overly confusing their statements through frequent fragmenting or piling, and improving overall coherence through literal restatements of sections A¹ and B.

Prévost’s original voice is heard in this work, especially in the use of harmonic language with the frequent use of a few tell-tale choices of intervals (particularly the tritone). Because he cannot be easily categorized into a particular school or style, and his works instead incorporate many influences, the strength of this work is found in its motivic development and how it applies to the careful trajectory of climax and release. Although the harmonic language is atonal, the extensive development of the “germ” idea harkens to more traditional Beethovenian influence,

giving the work a sense of purpose through the musical journey instead of in tangents. This blend of modernistic musical language with a more classical sense of motivic development gives Prévost's works a unique brand of drama. The result is a coherent work of romantic flair, expertly crafted in order to communicate broad musical themes while avoiding the shortfalls of overly complex or motivically-dense atonal music. Drama is a salient feature of the *Sonata No. 2 pour violoncelle et piano* through the graded treatment of range and timbre, and through the relationship of the two instruments that fluctuates between the clarity of melody-accompaniment texture in areas of thematic presentation to powerful combining of forces when building to climaxes.

The cultural significance of the work as it strongly represents an established style is two-fold. Being a French-Canadian composer, André Prévost is a leading representative of the culture of composition in Québec in the second half of the twentieth century and the influence of his teachers Jean Papineau-Couture and Olivier Messaien (of whom many French-Canadian composers studied). Although the music of Prévost shows an original style in its eclectic incorporation of many influences, he arguably also represents the style of lyrical atonal writing of Canadian composers in the Expressionist style of the early twentieth century.

The criteria of beauty is difficult to judge in this case, due to the current view that beauty applies mostly to tonal music. Since the work is extremely atonal due to the plethora of tritones that permeate both the melodic lines and make-up of the chords, with no sense of tonicization anywhere, the traditional view of beauty in music must be re-evaluated. Yet, the intervals connect to one another in a melodic manner through his craft of the melodic contour that avoids excessive use of disjointed intervals, lending a lyrical beauty to the work. The strength of the

superb idiomatic writing for the cello highlights the lyrical and powerful qualities of the instrument. Clarity of motivic material and the permeation of the initial idea throughout the work gives lucidity and proportion to the work. This clarity of material is accentuated through the coherent texture, where the instruments are allowed to distinctly present the themes while being supported with either held pitches or over an ostinato-like accompanimental figure, and therefore the beauty of the melodic lines are unobstructed.

Despite the difficulty of the work for the cellist, the idiomatic writing for the cello is exceptional. The work displays the lyrical quality of the cello well, especially in his dramatic use of the upper register. Virtuosity is exhibited through rhythmic passages of determined triplet figures or double dotted figures when combined with large shifts and quickly leaping intervals. The cello line drives the work, from the opening presentation of the melancholic “germ” idea to the presentation of each theme area to the passionate cadenza. The work possesses all of the qualities of an exciting and dramatic cello sonata through the sharp contrasts of violent passages, lyrical passages, and melancholic passages, while the permeation of the single motive strengthens the emotional trajectory of the work as a whole.

Public acceptance of André Prévost’s *Sonate No.2 pour violoncello et piano* (1985) has been marginal, but this may only be a factor of time since the work is relatively new. It has been published by Québec publisher Édition Doberman-Yppan in 1990, but has not been commercially recorded. However, its premiere performance, available as an archive recording through the CMC, was exceptional played by famous cellist Tsuyoshi Tsutsumi and pianist Ronald Turini.

Through championing the work in this thesis, I hope to bring attention to its potential as a significant twentieth century work in the cello repertoire. The work has many qualities that can be tangibly observed through the six criteria outlined above, particularly in its motivic interest and development. The Sonata is successful through the combination of familiar elements with the modern atonal harmonic language, such as the “germ” motive throughout, the coherent structure of distinctive sections that recur, the clear dialogue of the instruments, and the dramatic writing for the cello. The outcome to the listener is an exciting and coherent work that stretches the current taste of concert music without exhausting it. As the work was only composed in 1985, hopefully with the passing of time, Prévost’s *Sonate No. 2 pour violoncelle et piano* will gain popularity both within Canada and internationally.

Chapter 14

Conclusion

Most twentieth century concert music has had a difficult or limited existence within our current society, and it has fallen to the individual to challenge themselves to seek out new music. Performers and educators must proactively pursue the adequate representation of the twentieth century music for future generations by championing works of their choice in a more convincing way. In the case of Canadian music, a largely undiscovered body of work that has failed to emerge beyond the culture of its own country despite extensive governmental support, highlighting important works that deserve exposure to the international music community is necessary. The three works discussed in this thesis were chosen for their quality and potential for joining twentieth century cello repertoire.

Championing a work's quality can be fraught with subjectivity, therefore six criteria for judging a work's worth have been determined and discussed in detail. These general criteria were presented as tools to objectively evaluate any work (although they are directed to twentieth century works). The foremost criteria in twentieth century works, the craft of motivic content and structure, evaluated the skill of the composer's formal organization, pacing, and use of motivic material. The second criteria of original voice, a principle preoccupation of the twentieth century composer, determined whether or not the composer's work had sufficient innovation and artistic merit (such as distinctive voice, new style or technique, or new approach to established traditions) to remain or become culturally significant in the future. The contrasting criteria of strongly representing an established style distinguished exemplary styles and/or works from derivative ones (as twentieth century music encompasses a myriad of

composers and styles) through evaluating their significance of duration, fecundity, and influence on twentieth century music. The subjective criteria of beauty was quantified through comprehensible or familiar styles that exhibit tonality, proportion, and pleasing tone quality. Public acceptance commented on the challenges in presenting many twentieth century styles, and outlined ways improve the current apprehension towards new music through balancing recital programs, infusing programs with more twentieth century works, and seeking out commissions. The final criteria of accessibility to the cellist discussed the various technical issues of twentieth century cello works, such as harmonic language, extended techniques, ease of execution, as well as how to select challenging new music based not only on its technical attributes but on its artistic merit.

These criteria were applied to support the claim of excellence in three Canadian works: Jean Coulthard's *Sonata for Cello and Piano* (1947), Sophie-Carmen Eckhardt-Gramatté's *Duo Concertante* (1959), and André Prévost's *Sonate no. 2 pour violoncelle et piano* (1985). The three works are all worthy of joining twentieth century standard cello repertoire for different reasons. Coulthard's *Sonata* is the most accessible work, based on the beauty of the harmonic language, representation of the more traditional neo-romantic style, public acceptance, and approachable idiomatic writing for the cello. Eckhardt-Gramatté's *Duo Concertante* represented the cultivated showcase genre of the 1950s in a neoclassic idiom, demonstrated an original voice, excellent craft of motivic development, as well as accessibility to the cellist through quality idiomatic writing. Prévost's *Sonata* was distinguished through exceptional craft of motivic development and structure, and through his modern original voice.

Hopefully this thesis has piqued the interest of cellists as well as the academic community to take a more meaningful look at the works of Canadian composers. With the myriad of challenges of exposure and acceptance surrounding both Canadian music and twentieth century music in general, championing worthwhile works (especially those that are unknown) is the only way to ensure a work's place in history. Perhaps in the next century, we might look upon the repertoire of the twentieth century as commonly as we look upon a Beethoven Sonata, but it is up to the performer to act as a catalyst for artistic progress.

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